

Sermon: There's a Difference in *God's* Wisdom

Text: [I Corinthians 2:6-16 ESV](#)

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Introduction: We have all had the frustration of not understanding why others don't accept Christ. Why is it they just can't see what is so clear to us? The world for the most part is not made up of people like Richard Dawkins (*The God Delusion*, 2006), but people who are searching for meaning and happiness. Most people aren't atheist, but agnostics. They just don't know. Many are indifferent.

Dr. Marion Henderson (2012, 89) who started in the back of the church as a skeptic, but he liked a girl named Vera Martin (2009) who was his H.S. sweetheart. Sometimes the criticism of our (the) faith is not couched in arguments, but in indifference. Such was the case when William Willimon, Dean of the Chapel and Professor of Christian Ministry at Duke University, struck up a conversation with a student who was an usher at the Sunday chapel services. Dr. Willimon asked the young man how he liked the chapel. He responded that he liked it. Dr. Willimon asked him what he thought about the preaching. The student said he liked the preaching. Dr. Willimon asked him what he liked about the preaching. The student said that he just liked it. Dr. Willimon pressed for specifics. The student replied, "Look, Dr. Willimon, I'll be honest with you. I come to chapel to meet women" [William Willimon, "Preaching to the Disinclined," in Steve Brown, Haddon Robinson and William Willimon, *A Voice in the Wilderness: Clear Preaching in a Complicated World* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah Books, 1993), p. 147.

The student was not hostile to the Christian faith. He was not intellectually troubled by it. He was just indifferent to it. This criticism, of course, is nothing new. The Apostle Paul encountered it wherever he went. The Corinthian Christians found that they, too, were the subject of ridicule, bad jokes, prejudice and hostility from a skeptical and disbelieving community. The Corinthian Christians proposed a solution. They suggested changing the gospel to make it more palatable to their neighbors. Paul wrote explaining that the gospel operates on a wisdom that is different from the wisdom of the world. Paul wrote—[I Corinthians 2:6-9 ESV](#) ⁶ Yet among the **mature** we do impart wisdom, although it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to pass away. ⁷ But **we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed** before the ages for our glory. ⁸ None of the rulers of this age understood this, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. ⁹ But, as it is written, "What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him"—

About 81% of people in the U.S. believe in God, yet less than 31% according to a recent Gallup poll even attend church services regularly. Of those who attend, you have to wonder WHY they do, because by looking at some of their lives-----there are questions.

Illus. Non-Christians cannot understand God, and they cannot grasp the concept that God's Spirit lives in believers. Don't expect most people to approve of, or understand your decision to follow Christ. It all seems so silly to them. Just as a tone-deaf person cannot appreciate fine music, the person who rejects God cannot understand God's beautiful message and offer of salvation. And when is the last time you got an invitation to eat with the King? With the lines of communication broken, he or she won't be able to hear what God is saying to him or her.

Here in Paul's letter to the Corinthians he tries to give them:

I. A Definition of God's Wisdom (vv. 6-9)

Let's look at it two ways. First of all let's look at what wisdom is not:

A. God's wisdom is not logical according to mankind.

People have called Christianity "a crutch for the weak-minded" or an "opiate of the masses".

Former Governor Jesse Ventura summed up the feelings of many people when he said that Christians are weak people who need a religious crutch to get them through life. Paul Davies, a professor of physics in Australia and a prolific writer, wrote in his book, *God and the New Physics* (Simon & Schuster, 1983),: "the Church is largely ignored today . . . because it [meaning science] has so radically reoriented our society that the biblical perspective of the world now seems largely irrelevant" (p. 2). And Richard Dawkins, a professor at Oxford University and an ardent proponent of evolution, voiced opposition to religion in general and Christianity in particular when he wrote: "Faith is the great cop-out, the great excuse to evade the need to think and evaluate evidence. Faith is belief in spite of, even perhaps because of, the lack of evidence." So many people have an intellectual aversion to the Christian faith because they simply do not believe that Jesus is the Son of God or even that there is a God. They dismiss everything we believe as nonsense.

Yet there are contrary examples of very well-educated people turning from disbelieving to devoted followers. Josh McDowell (*Evidence that Demands a Verdict*, Vols. 1-2; *A Ready Defense*) and Lee Strobel (*A Case for Christ*) being two examples in our time.

Accepting the gospel (Christ) has to be more than a "leap of faith" (S. Kierkegaard).

B. God makes sense only to the mature.

This Greek word, *mature*, is sometimes translated “perfect,” but here we are talking about people who are fully grown spiritually. Pythagorus divided his disciples into those who were babes and those who were *teleioi*. Paul, as well, complains to the church that they are just babies where they should have grown up by now.

I Corinthians 3:1-3 ESV ¹ But I, brothers, could not address you as spiritual people, but as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ. ² I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for it. And even now you are not yet ready, ³ for you are still of the flesh. For while there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not of the flesh and behaving only in a human way?

C. God provides for salvation inspite of man’s help.

Conventional Wisdom today says if the majority of people don’t think the way you do, DON’T DO IT! God has His own unique ways of approaching things. We see this in the life of Jesus. The professional religious leaders were looking at the front door of the world when He came in through the back door. No one expected the Messiah to be a peasant with no religious or leadership credentials. No one expected Him to be an itinerant religious teacher and healer. No one expected Him to die on a cross. No one expected Him to rise from the dead. Everything Jesus did caught the professional Messiah watchers by surprise. Ironically enough, they were the ones who were His most dedicated opponents. They were the ones who eventually had Him nailed to the cross. It was the people who had the least religious credentials—the tax collectors, political zealots, prostitutes and common people—who welcomed Him and recognized who He was.

Can you imagine what would have happened if God would have done it our way? God planned ahead for the future. Man only seems to plan for today, banks against tomorrow, and depends on the physical.

II. How Can I Understand God’s Wisdom? (vv.10-13)

I Corinthians 2:10-13 ESV ¹⁰ these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. ¹¹ For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. ¹² Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. ¹³ And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual.

A. The Holy Spirit is the agent of revelation.

It is God's Spirit that can teach our spirit. Who better to help us understand? It is the Holy Spirit that can make clear the **mysteries** (v.7 **KJV**) or a **secret and hidden wisdom** of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glory.

B. The Holy Spirit helped write Scripture.

II Timothy 3:16 ESV ¹⁶ All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness,

also **II Peter 1:16-21 ESV** ¹⁶ For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. ¹⁷ For when he received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was borne to him by the Majestic Glory, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased," ¹⁸ we ourselves heard this very voice borne from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain. ¹⁹ And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts, ²⁰ knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. ²¹ For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

C. The Holy Spirit is also our best instructor (**vv. 12-13**)

Charles Spurgeon once said, "The power that is in the Gospel does not lie in the eloquence of the preacher, otherwise men would be the converters of souls, nor does it lie in the preacher's learning, otherwise it would consist in the wisdom of men. We might preach until our tongues rotted, till we would exhaust our lungs and die, but never a soul would be converted unless the Holy Spirit be with the Word of God to give it the power to convert the soul."

III. The World Will Never Get It!

The world does not have a spirit that discerns the truth.

Illus. If a person studies a foreign language long enough he will develop a proficiency and even feel at home with it. Yet what most people do is just enough to meet the bare requirements. And they stay babies, so to speak, in their language skills. While others only know a little, not even the bare minimum requirements, and end up misunderstanding what is being said or intended.

These are the people who criticize Christianity without ever having studied or tried to find God. Because it does not make sense to them, they discount it as having any value at all.

I Corinthians 2:14-16 ESV ¹⁴ The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. ¹⁵ The spiritual person judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one. ¹⁶ “For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?” But we have the mind of Christ.

There are two words here that are important to understand in these last few verses:

In verse 14:

1. “natural person” (KJV, ESV) or man without the Spirit (NIV) - φυσικος

This word is related to *psuche* and sometimes translated “soul,” but this word form deals with what gives physical life. Even animals have a *psuche*.

This is the man who only thinks about himself, about the physical, about the NOW! This is the person who has no thought for anyone else. He believes that this world is it! Little does he understand that someday all this will be a cinder and dust. It is like the fabled story of the grasshopper and the ant.

In verse 15:

2. “spiritual person” - πνευματικος

This is the man that knows there is something beyond the physical, just as real, and of even more value. He is in tune with God and the Holy Spirit. He is led by God’s Spirit. He consults God’s Spirit. He is even able to discern God’s Spirit. He makes decisions and prayers that God honors because they are in God’s will.

1’s - they do not have the mind of Christ, but we who are 2’s have the mind of Christ.

Conclusion: It really is the result of man’s searching after God that God reveals Himself.

It is impossible for a lesser creature to fully understand a greater. For example, next time you see a flea, ask him to describe a dog to you. A flea can in no way understand a dog.

A dog, as much as we like to think they do, can’t understand a human. I remember “The Far Side” cartoon which showed an owner talking to his dog. The owner said, “Now Fido, go get the paper and my slippers and come right back, ok Fido? Good Dog.” All Fido heard was, “Blah, Fido, blah blah blah blah Fido blah blah.”

Dogs don't understand us. They relate to humans by instinct. Dogs like their owners because they get fed and petted and have a nice warm place to sleep.

People without God's Spirit may be much like the family pet at church. They feel good, but they have no idea what God is really saying or wanting from them.

If we are to be saved we must meet up with God and study His word allowing His Spirit to live in us through faith and by His grace.

Eventually time will be no more. History will be just that - history. It will all be over. Time will be no more. The only thing eternal on its own is God. So obviously, the wisdom of this age matters very little to God.

Just a few short years from now, if that, no one will care what Jesse Ventura said about anything let alone some important topic. But God's Word will be the measure of a man's life and future with God. His word is eternal.

A little like fashion that once was popular, so it is with man's ideas. Even the way we do church and the fights and divisions over petty things will have been forgotten and filed under "UNIMPORTANT".

I can feel God's presence in the middle of an Episcopalian church or in a farm field listening to a music group called Petra lead in a communion service. Why? Because God's Spirit is in me! I hope He's in you. That is what real wisdom is all about. And it comes from God and God alone!

The Story Of The Ant And The Grasshopper (from Aesop's Fables) In A Few Lines

A grasshopper was enjoying the summer sun and chirping away heartily. He saw his little friend, the ant sweating away, carrying food from the field to her home on her back. When she passed him, he smiled and ask her to join him.

"Don't work so hard. Come, sing with me for a while and enjoy the sunshine."

The ant turned around and told him, "I am saving for a rainy day."

"The winters will be so cold, and we won't be able to come out.

That is when this food will serve me well," the ant explained.

The grasshopper was a jolly fellow who lived in the moment.

He told his friend, the ant, not to worry about the winter, as it was still far away.

The wise ant looked up at him and said, "You should plan in advance. Time flies. When winter comes, you will be cold and hungry."

The grasshopper laughed at the ant, paying no heed to her advice and continued with his singing.

Soon, winter arrived, and the grasshopper was unable to find food. Cold and weak, the grasshopper approached his friend for some food and shelter. The ant refused to help him because she had worked hard to save enough only for herself. She reminded him of her advice and how he had made fun of her.

The message in this story is to use every moment of your life wisely and to think about the future.

Don't waste your life by not preparing for what is real life now and eternal life later.

Make a wise decision today to avoid being left out "in the cold," later with no food, no shelter, and no future and most importantly without God...