

## Going Deeper with the Sermon

Simon 1 Cor 2:10b-16

“having the mind of Christ”

The wisdom of God = the Gospel: the message of salvation through the crucifixion of Jesus Christ.

So can people understand God’s wisdom? Can humans understand the message of salvation through Jesus Christ crucified? From 1 Cor 2:10b-16 Paul would say no.

**Why not?** The message of Jesus Christ crucified is a divine message. It’s divine wisdom. Wisdom from God. And Paul’s argument in this passage is that humans just don’t have the ability to understand divine things. We just don’t get it. **v 14** – a natural man can not understand the things of God. Ie. Divine things. It says they are foolishness to him and he cannot understand them.

**How come? V 11....** Only you know the thoughts that go on inside your head. Know one else can read your mind and know exactly what’s going on in there. We might get pretty good at guessing but no-one really knows the thoughts of a man except the man’s spirit or mind within him. If that’s the case with us how much more the case with God. No one can know the thoughts of God except God. We have no ability to know the thoughts of God and consequently we have no ability to understand divine wisdom.

Paul isn’t putting down the mind of man. The mind of man is an amazing thing. Our minds, our intellects are wonderful and incredible. It’s just that as we come to divine things it is as if our minds hit an impenetrable barrier. Divine wisdom and divine thoughts are hidden from us. We just do not possess any faculty within us to understand them.

**A.W. Tozer** "The man who tries to understand and get a hold of spiritual things comes up against a blank wall. He takes doctrines and texts and proofs and creeds and theology, and lays them up like a wall – but he cannot find the gate! He stands in the darkness and all about him is intellectual knowledge of God. But he is still in the darkness."

It is possible to grow up in the church and not know God at all. **Why?** Because when the bible talks about knowing God it isn’t talking about merely intellectual knowledge of God. There is a difference between knowing about God and knowing God. Like the difference between a friend and a fan.

But Paul doesn’t leave us without hope. We can’t know God by our intellect but there is a way to know God.

**What is that way?** Paul has said - no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. **V 12 ...we have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us.**

It’s true that we can’t know another’s mind unless we can go inside their mind. But what if they can put a portion of their mind or spirit inside of us? This is what happens when we become Christians. We receive a portion of the mind or Spirit of God. And when we receive the Spirit of God we are able to understand the wisdom of God revealed in the sacrifice of his Son Jesus Christ. The light comes on because the light of the world has come and illumined our minds. We receive a portion of the mind of Christ.

**Paul’s main point** => the key to understanding God’s wisdom lies with the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is the key that unlocks the gate. The Spirit is the light that illuminates the room. There is a vast distance between an intellectual understanding of the message of Jesus Christ crucified and a spirit revealed understanding of that message.

**V 13..** both content and delivery of message is of the Spirit.

**v 14 ...** a person without the Holy Spirit finds things of the Spirit foolish and he doesn’t understand him because they are spiritually discerned.

The Corinthians were thinking to themselves that they’d moved beyond Paul’s message and preaching. That they were too intelligent and wise for it, living as they did in the next wisest city in the world after Athens. Paul’s subtext then is to the extent that you think you are beyond the message I preach, to that extent, though you have the Spirit of God in you, you are acting like people who don’t. People without the mind of Christ, thinking they are so wise that they can bypass the very wisdom of God revealed in the cross.

**V 15 ..** It’s only the person with the Holy Spirit in them who has the big picture. Only they have the potential to understand both spiritual matters and the matters of the world. The person without the spirit can only understand the things of the world.

**V 16/17 ..** In other words, you Corinthians don’t be enamoured with the wise man of the world. For who among those without the Spirit of God has ever been one to know the Lord’s thoughts, or to discuss them with him, or to move the hands of God by prayer. But you Christians, strange as it may seem actually have within you a portion of the mind of Christ.

**Not only a Corinthian dilemma ..** It is possible that a lot of churches and Christians today are to one degree or another under this same error. Under the wrong assumption that spiritual things can be intellectually perceived. One example is our approach to the word of God as an intellectual exercise rather than a Spiritual one.

If we want to grow in our understanding of God and his Word we need to pray often as we pick up our bible – “God make me a little child. Empty me of my pre-conceived notions and assumptions about you. Teach me your mind. Put your mind in me. The bible opens up to us that way. But how the bible closes up to the wise fool who thinks he knows everything and imagines, like the Corinthians did, that he can give advice to Paul or Peter or even Jesus Christ and God himself.

Though we give thanks to God for our intellect we do not put it up on a pedestal. We know that it is God’s pleasure to reveal himself unto babes....and so we are happy to make ourselves like babes before him and trust his Holy Spirit in us to reveal the truths of his precious Word to us.

### Questions for reflection

1. Share with the group how it is that you came to respond to the message of Jesus and him crucified?
2. How do you respond to the reality that as a follower of Jesus you have been given the mind of Christ?
3. In what ways do you see we are in danger of putting the intellect above the spirit?
4. Do you have any other thoughts/questions from 1 Cor 2:10b-16?
5. What is God talking to you about and prompting you to do?