

1 Corinthians 2:11-16 The Advantage of The Spirit Falls Ch. PM 5/28/2023

Today is Pentecost Sunday, the day 50 days after the Resurrection of Christ, when we celebrate the gift of the Holy Spirit. Tonight rather than tell the history of the day of Pentecost, we are asking this question: What is the advantage to us? If I had to say it in one word, I would say the word WISDOM.

Every wise scholar or sage in the history of the world has wanted to discover what are now studying in these verses. In this passage we find the answers to the biggest questions of religion – spiritual wisdom, spiritual mystery, spiritual knowledge, divine revelation, the meaning of our lives now, and future glorification.

In the section of 1 Cor. chapters 1-3, Paul uses the term wisdom sixteen times! Why? Because it is an important word that had been misused in the city of Corinth. Paul was rescuing the word, and restoring its definition. The false wisdom as others were presenting is different from the true wisdom of God.

**Christ has given us His Spirit so that we know and understand His thoughts, His wisdom and His mind!**

CROSS - Christ's death and resurrection has made us spiritual persons.

**FALSE WISDOM**

wisdom/rulers of THIS age (v.6,v.8)  
those who crucified the Lord of glory (v.8)  
the spirit of this world (v.12)  
the unspiritual person (v.14)

**GOD'S WISDOM**

Our future glorification (v.7)  
Those who love God (v.9)  
The Spirit from God (v.12)  
The spiritual person (v.15)

**1. Our access to the thoughts of God. (v.11-12)**

*(verses 11-12), "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. 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."*

In verse 11, Paul used a common way of comparing. The Greeks and Romans had a philosophical principle that they used as a persuasive strategy in

writing and speaking – they called it 'like by like' or 'same by same.' It means that the same sort of person is known by the same sort of person. A quilter is known by another quilter. A gardener talks with other gardeners. Why do you have tarps over your flowerbeds? Oh, ask a gardener – because of the overnight frost. A sports fan talks with other sports fans. A hunter is known by a hunter. Paul's point here is that humans know the human, and things on the human plane of existence, because we are, ourselves, humans. But we are not seeking human wisdom but rather we are seeking God's wisdom, which leads us to the question - who can know God? God alone knows God. So, for explaining God to us, there must be a divine connection point. There is. The Holy Spirit is that link, that divine interface between us and God. Without the Spirit, the humans would not be able to know God. As Paul wrote at the end of verse 10, "*The Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God.*" The Spirit knows God, because the Spirit is God.

The Spirit was given to us so that the Spirit can reveal to humans the otherwise imperceptible wisdom of God, namely, Christ crucified.

Verse 12, 'the spirit of the world' is those living in this age who are not of congruity with God, and most foundationally, they do not understand God.

The gift of the Spirit is what enables this understanding.

Verse 12, the phrase "*the things freely given us by God*" the verb 'to freely give' conveys the idea of giving without regard to merit. We don't deserve, and we have not earned, and we are not good enough to receive the things freely given to us. All by grace, and all by the Spirit, we are given access to the very thoughts of God Himself!

## **2. Our ability to know spiritual wisdom. (v.13-15)**

Verses 13-15, "*And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual. 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. The spiritual person judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one.”*

In verse 13, when Paul used the word Spiritual, Paul was referring to the Holy Spirit. Spiritual in the sense that The Holy Spirit is involved. So, in verse 13, Paul was showing us that the Spirit does teach us. What sort of things does the Spirit teach us? Spiritual truths, or truths known only to the Holy Spirit. To whom does the Spirit teach these truths? To those who are spiritual, or to those who are directly influenced by the Spirit of God.

The point is well taken. It means that the human mind - the unassisted human mind - no matter the level of IQ and mental ability, is unable to grasp and fathom the depths of God. No human being has been added to the Godhead, so that it has gone from three to four. The Trinitarian Godhead is still three persons – the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Because we are not part of the Trinity, Paul is urging us to remember the important and essential role of the Spirit to give us wisdom from God. The human mind, without the Spirit’s help, cannot understand the things of God. Humans can read the Bible. Humans can hear the gospel, and understand how it works, but they not embrace, cannot truly understand, cannot get the mindset that only the Spirit grants to human minds. It is The Spirit who converts; The Spirit alone who brings one from darkness to light.

Do you see that this applies to you and me? Hear the challenge of the sharp question from one of the friends of Job. Job 11:7, “*Can you find out the deep things of God? Can you find out the limit of the Almighty?*” You and I are impacted by the truths we are studying now. We do not have the ability to access these things, unless the Spirit opens our ears. Revelation 2:7, “*He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.*” Have we been given an ear to hear the Spirit’s voice speaking to the church of Jesus Christ?

The prideful modern man thinks that he sits in judgment over God, when it is the other way around - God sits in judgment over us. The Spirit of God searches everything, which means that nothing escapes His attention. Hebrews 4:13, “...no creature is hidden from His sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.” Other people think that they are sneaky and elusive and that the Spirit could not possibly know what they are doing, but again we read in Proverbs 15:3, “The eyes of The LORD are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good.” And that proverbial truth is not just applied in the negative direction of the Spirit noticing our sins. That truth is also in a positive direction of the Spirit noticing our acts of loving service to Him and His people. Hebrews 6:10, “God is not unjust so as to overlook your work and the love that you have shown for His name in serving the saints, as you still do.”

MOVING ON TO VERSE 14, WE SEE A CONTRAST: In verse 14, the natural person is contrasted to the spiritual person of verse 15. The contrast is unique here. Usually, Paul was writing about the contrast of spirit vs. flesh. But here, Paul was contrasting spirit with soul. It is because of the way the Corinthians understood these two ideas in tandem, that is, spirit and soul often referred to the same thing. Only in this place, as Paul used the word natural in verse 14, to refer to the corruptible, fallen condition, and Paul used the phrase “spiritual person” to refer to the condition of a saved person.

So, verse 14 showed what happens when the Spirit was missing. Humans resisted the revelation of the Spirit, and rejected as foolish the 'things of the Spirit,' what is spiritually discerned. Both the individual person and all persons are in view here. It is a common human experience, of unbelief or spiritual awakening.

Verse 15 shows what happens when persons receive the benefits of the reception of the Spirit.

First a statement....the spiritual person makes is able to make judgments about

all things. This is the same truth as was stated back in verse 14, but stated inversely. The two opposite statements are both true – the unspiritual person is not able to make discerning observations, but the spiritual person is able to differentiate. Moving on now within verse 15 to a second statement, and here Paul wrote that this person, this spiritual person, is himself not subject to any man's judgment. The power of spiritual discernment abilities equals freedom from human scrutiny. Who can tell him that he is wrong?

What does this mean? It means that whenever liberal persons attempt to accuse the Christian of being old-fashioned and holding to an ethic from the dark ages, the spiritual person is encouraged to be reminded that he is not indicted by such a false charge. Why? Because the Christian has his ethic on good authority – on the authority that is above all persons – the good authority and higher authority that the Christian has is the authority of the third person of the Godhead, even the Holy Spirit of God. On the authority of the Spirit, the spiritual person evaluates all things. That way of living and evaluating stands safely above the criticisms of liberals.

### **3. Our incredible gift of the mind of Christ! (v.16)**

Verse 16, *“For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?” But we have the mind of Christ.”*

Let's say someone who is burdened, comes you a Christian, and confides in you – I messed up, and do you think that I could still pray for God's forgiveness, and for God's guidance in what to do to get out of my messed up situation? You can confidently answer yes. God forgives, and yes God guides us through our messed up situations. How do we know that? Clear teaching such as Romans 8:32, *“He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?”* We can share with our troubled friend about the mind and heart of God that is intent on giving out mercy!

In Matthew 22:37-39, when Jesus summarized the law He said we love God with all our heart, soul, strength and MIND. With the Spirit's help, we start to think about things and people like God thinks about things and people.

Paul wrote in Romans 11 and 12 what seems like a caution at first, that we do not know the mind of the Lord. But when we consider the whole passage, Paul is expanding on what he has written here in 1 Corinthians, that we DO get to know the mind of the Lord! The Spirit of the Lord reveals to us the will and mind of the Lord through the Word of the Lord! Listen to Romans...

Romans 11:33-12:2, *“Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! “For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?” “Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?” For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen. I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.”*

We DO have the mind of Christ! As the Spirit teaches us, we become more and more in line with the thoughts of the living God! The thoughts of God are forgiving us, and guiding us to live more and more like Christ. We desire to fulfill God's law, to do God's will, to reflect God's glory with our lives. That means thinking the thoughts of Christ, and speaking like Christ speaks, and loving like Christ loves, and living like Christ lived. We have the Spirit of Christ to help us with that, every day. Christ's death and resurrection has made us spiritual persons.

**Conclusion:**

Sometimes people ask US – what is God like in this situation or in response

to that situation? We find that we are able to field those questions, because of knowing the mind of Christ. How do we know the mind of Christ? It was given to us by the Word of Christ and the Spirit of Christ. Christ's death and resurrection has made us spiritual persons.

The Holy Spirit came 50 days after Jesus rose again. The Spirit brought a wisdom that was not previously known. That is the advantage of the Spirit.

Ephesians 3:4-5, *“When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit.”*

God made His mind known to us when He gave us His Word, His Son, and then His Spirit. As we read carefully the Bible, we apply the teachings of the mind of Christ to ourselves and our lives. Paul wrote in Philippians 2:5, *“Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus.”*

This sort of insight and wisdom is one of the advantages of the Spirit.