

1 Cor. 2:1-16 (LD 25, Q/A65) “Word and Spirit”

For the Children: People often talk about “having faith” in a certain person, or that a certain thing will take place. They mean that they want you to *trust* that person, or that that thing will happen. Of course, we cannot trust other people with 100% certainty. Nor can we predict the future with any certainty. When the Bible speaks of faith, it means much more than simply trusting God. It is speaking of a gift that comes from God and is created in us by God’s Word and Spirit. This faith comes with certainty that God is, that His Word is true, and that He has saved us from our sins through His Son. **Questions:** Can we make people have faith in the Lord? What is needed for people to have faith in God? Why can unbelievers not truly understand the Bible?

Introduction:

First Point: We Do Not Come with Worldly Wisdom

- 1) Not with Human Might: The Corinthians loved philosophy, logic and rhetoric. They were unimpressed with Paul’s preaching (2 Cor. 10:10). But Paul did not want to convince them by such methods.
- 2) In Weakness and Trembling: Paul saw himself as coming to the Corinthians in “weakness and in fear and in much trembling” (v. 3). He was perhaps aware of the weaknesses of his delivery, as well as his inability to convert a single soul. He knew that it depended on the will and power of God.
- 3) Faith Resting on the Right Foundation: The apostle wanted the faith of the Corinthians to rest on the right basis – not on human logic or rhetoric. So he desired to deliver God’s own testimony (His Word), to centre on Christ and Him crucified, to demonstrate the power and wisdom of God. For that alone is where faith can come from (Q65).

Second Point: We Do Come with Wisdom from God’s Word

- 1) The Word of Wisdom: The wisdom of God comes, therefore, from God’s Word. See Prov. 1:1-7. When we proclaim Christ, we are also holding forth the Wisdom of God (1 Cor. 1:24). He/God’s Word is, in fact, the greatest wisdom of all. Yet those great in the world’s wisdom cannot understand this.
- 2) The Word of Mystery: God’s wisdom is a “mystery” – truth that cannot be known unless God chooses to reveal it to man. Before the world began the Lord prepared to unveil His truth for those who love Him, Thus believers know what others cannot even imagine (Is. 64:4, 65:17, with 1 Cor. 2:9).
- 3) The Word the World Cannot Understand: However, this wisdom is not made known to all. The Word remains a mystery to the unbeliever, who is unable to understand it. That is why the Jews and Romans crucified Christ. It is also why the devil and his demons encouraged the crucifixion, because they do not really understand the truth either.

Third Point: God’s Wisdom Is Spiritually Discerned

- 1) The Necessary Spirit: The true understanding of God’s Word requires the work of the Holy Spirit. An analogy is taken from human experience. The only one who knows a man’s thoughts is the man’s spirit. So with God, the only One who knows the mind of God is the Holy Spirit. He searches all things, including the deep things of God. That is why He must work in us to give a true understanding of God’s Word.
- 2) The Spirit Given: The Spirit does indeed carry out that work in God’s people. We receive this Spirit in His work of regeneration, from which comes faith. He also illumines our minds so we can grow in the Scriptures. Thus spiritual words (the Bible) are combined with spiritual thoughts (from the Spirit). This does not bypass the need for us to study the Scripture, but enables us to profit from it.
- 3) The Spirit Withheld: Because the natural man does not have the Spirit of God dwelling within, he cannot understand the Word of God. The Word is “spiritually discerned/appraised” i.e., only with the help of the Holy Spirit. For the same reason, the unbeliever cannot understand us when we speak of God’s Word. We have the “mind of Christ/God” which they cannot understand (Is. 40:13).

Conclusion: