

Series: The Wisdom, Wonder, and Witness of the Gospel
Comprehending the Gospel # 4
1 Corinthians 2: 6-9

While dealing with the many struggles present in Corinth, Paul began with the fundamentals. He was well aware the church needed a solid foundation upon which to build. He knew the Gospel of Jesus Christ was the center-piece of the church and its mission. Apart from a personal relationship with Christ, obtained through receiving the Gospel by faith, one has no part of the body of Christ. Paul was well aware of the significance and universal importance of the Gospel. The church could accomplish many things, but if their lives and work were not founded upon the Gospel, it would profit little and result in vanity.

The same remains true in our day. I realize the Bible offers much needed instruction for spiritual growth and nurturing a sanctified life. We need not minimize those passages, but we must ensure that we develop a solid foundation from which to build. One cannot grow spiritually or live in a way that pleases the Lord apart from salvation. The Gospel is the center-piece, the ultimate message of the church.

We have considered various aspects of the Gospel in recent weeks, and we will continue to do so today. In our text, Paul emphasizes the wisdom associated with the Gospel. Although it is very significant, it is not hard to explain. The Gospel is simply: the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ for the salvation of humanity. That seems easy enough to understand, but many were struggling to receive it. This trend continues today. If you are unsure, I hope today's lesson will provide the insight you need to embrace the Gospel. I want to consider Paul's [observations](#) as we think on: [Comprehending the Gospel](#).

I. The Relevance of the Gospel (6-7) – Here Paul discusses the relevance of the Gospel and its significance in the lives of those who believe. Consider:

A. The Proclamation (6a) – [Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect](#). Paul makes no apology for his sharing of the Gospel. In fact, he was committed to sharing it with all who would hear, regardless of where he was or whose presence he was in. He knew the impact it had on his life and he was determined to present it to all he could.

- Notice whom Paul spoke this wisdom: [among them that are perfect](#). This speaks of the believer, those who have embraced the Gospel as truth; those willing to acknowledge the great sacrifice Jesus made on behalf of sinners, dying in their place and rising triumphantly from the grave. It doesn't imply they live above sin, but those who have embraced the Gospel and are

mature in their faith. They are settled on what they believe, regardless of the opinions or doctrines of others.

B. The Preeminence (6b) – yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought. Paul confirms there is a significant difference in the wisdom of God concerning the Gospel and the wisdom of this world, as well as that embraced and promoted by the prominent of society. The wisdom men possess is of this world and it will not last. It will prove unreliable and fail to produce acceptance to God or life eternal. Many in Paul's day chose to embrace the wisdom of this world, but it would come to naught in their lives. It might provide temporary satisfaction, but it would not meet the great spiritual need all men have. **1 Cor.1:18-19** – For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. ^[19] For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.

C. The Perception (7a) – But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory. Paul now speaks of the wisdom of God being a mystery, a wisdom that is hidden. He does not imply that the wisdom of God cannot be received or that it is something strange or puzzling. He refers to the ability to comprehend God's wisdom, the wisdom of the Gospel. He will address this further in following verses, but this simply speaks of the need for spiritual discernment to comprehend the wisdom of God. The natural man has no desire for the things of God and cares nothing for the wisdom of God. Such wisdom is kept in secret for those who know the Lord and desire to learn of Him.

- For those who lived prior to the cross and the resurrection, the wisdom of the Gospel was revealed only in types, pictures, and shadows. For many it remained a mystery. We enjoy the benefit of the full revelation of God. We are presented with the complete picture, and are able to see it more clearly as the mystery has been revealed. However, even though the Gospel has been fully revealed, all men are not willing to embrace it. The eyes of their spiritual understanding have not been opened and the Gospel remains a mystery to them as well. One needs the Holy Spirit to open his understanding in order to comprehend the mystery of the Gospel. Otherwise it will remain foolishness and be rejected as a myth or fable.

D. The Provision (7b) – But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory. Here Paul speaks of the great provision God made for us through the giving of His Son as the sacrifice for sin. God knew long before He ever created Adam of the dust of the earth that he would fall in sin and need a Savior. God also knew that only a perfect sacrifice would atone for the sin of humanity. This would require the offering of His Son.

- We must understand, the plan of the Gospel and the salvation of men was not an afterthought with God. Prior to man's initial sin and the subsequent fall of the human race, God had a plan. Long before He even ordained the creation, God had already made provision for the redemption of humanity. Long before we needed the wisdom of such a sacrifice, God had ordained the offering of Christ for our sin and our enlightenment to the Gospel.

E. The Purpose (7b) – *But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory.* This does not imply that through our reception of the Gospel we share in the glory of God. His glory is reserved for Himself alone, but it does reveal the purpose for the Gospel. God ordained the death of His Son for the saving of humanity. The life we live upon this earth is but a small part of our eternal existence. God desired that mankind have fellowship with Him forever. This is not possible within a body of flesh that is prone to sin. There has to be a transformation. In salvation we are promised acceptance to God and eternal life in His glorious presence. Through faith in Christ, we are placed within the family of God as heirs of the eternal promise. We will lay aside these bodies of flesh that are prone to sin and one day put on a new, glorified body in the presence of our Lord. [Rom.8:18 – For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.](#) God made provision for our salvation, revealing the mystery of the Gospel, for a purpose: our salvation.

II. The Refusal of the Gospel (8) – After he speaks of the great significance and relevance of the Gospel, Paul refers again to those who refuse and reject the Gospel. He speaks of:

A. Their Ignorance (8a) – *Which none of the princes of this world knew:* The princes of this world, those who held positions of prominence, influence, and authority knew nothing of the plans of God or the saving grace of Jesus Christ the Lord. These were surrounded by those they deemed worthy. The ruling figures had courts comprised of men perceived as wise to guide their plans and decisions. They lacked nothing in regard to material possessions. For the most part, these were the epitome of success and the average person longed to be in their place. With all they possessed, having access to everything imaginable, they lacked the matter of most importance: the wisdom of God that leads to salvation. They cared little for the things of God and most never obtained godly wisdom.

- The influence and desires of popular culture have not faded in our time. Our society is influenced, and largely driven, by those in places of power, fame, and prestige. The average person seeks to obtain the position these have, never realizing their complete lack and utter ignorance. The Christian will never be embraced by society. The faithful to God will never be revered as role models for the masses. Although the believer may be ostracized and rejected,

they possess something this world didn't offer and it cannot take away. We may never have our name in lights on a marquee or enjoy familiarity in average homes, but we can rest in the fact that our names are known in heaven.

B. The Injustice (8b) – *for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.* Paul speaks of the great injustice committed as Christ was condemned and crucified for crimes he had not committed. Those who cast their voices against Him would not have done so had they known the wisdom of God that leads to salvation. Had they recognized Jesus as the Christ they would have embraced Him rather than consenting to His horrid death on the cross. Their lack of wisdom blinded their eyes to the Truth.

- Things have changed much, and yet they remain very much the same. Jesus will never be crucified again, but a lack of wisdom among the masses causes their rejection of Christ and His saving grace. The majority in our world never realize the great sacrifice Jesus made on our behalf. They refuse to acknowledge their need of salvation or look to Christ by faith. If these only possessed the wisdom of God, understanding the mystery of the Gospel, they would submit to the authority of Christ, repent of sin, and be saved by faith in His finished work!

III. The Radiance of the Gospel (9) – Having argued the importance of the Gospel, Paul now declares the glorious radiance it possesses and the gracious benefit it provides. Consider:

A. The Majesty (9) – *But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.* Even though many have embraced the Gospel, having been enlightened to the plan and purposes of God, none can properly comprehend the magnitude of its majesty. Eyes have not seen, ears have not heard, and thoughts have not even entered the heart of man in relation to all that God is and what we have received in Him. The grace of God that brings salvation and the great provision that has been made for all the saved is beyond our ability to grasp. Childlike faith is all that is required to receive Christ, and I am convinced that a childlike understanding of the magnitude of such a gift is all we will comprehend in this life. God's love and provision for us is greater than anything we can imagine or understand. We will not know fully until we stand in His presence in heaven.

B. The Measure (9) – Paul declares that there is no way we can begin to imagine all that God has prepared for those that love Him. Our feeble minds haven't even scratched the surface of the abundance the believer has in Christ. We will never reach the depths of God's great love and

provision for the saved. His works and abundance are limitless. [Phil.4:19 – But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.](#)

- This is a verse we often hear read at funerals or memorial services, and it is quite fitting for such an occasion. We will experience much more than we ever dreamed when we enter the eternal presence of our Lord and Savior. However, we must consider this verse within its context. We do it no injustice by looking toward an imaginable future, but it isn't reserved for that time. We are dealing with the context of the Gospel and those who receive it. The saved can claim this verse right now, even as we live upon this earth. God has far more in store for us now than we can begin to comprehend. We will never exhaust the vastness of His grace, mercy, love, and provision for us. We don't have to wait until we get to heaven to enjoy the blessings of God. We can enjoy them right now!

Conclusion: Again I am reminded of the great love God had for us and the provision He made prior to the creation of the world or mankind. We were loved beyond measure long before our existence. Surely we can depend on One who loved that much and provided the means of our salvation. We will never encounter a need that He is unable to supply.

I am thankful that the Holy Spirit opened my understanding to the Gospel and I was given the chance to respond by faith. I still can't grasp all I received in Christ, but I am thankful for His saving grace. I am resting in His finished work. Have you received the wisdom of God that leads to salvation? Are you willing to respond by faith and be saved? If you haven't trusted Christ by faith, don't be as those of this world and reject His provision for you. Christ died so that you might be forgiven and live. Come to Him and receive the gift of salvation.