

“Christ Crucified, The Wisdom Of God”

1 Corinthians 2:1-16

Message by Michael J. Barnard

November 18, 2018

Teaching Aim: To realize we don't have to be specially trained or gifted in oratory to be used by God; we need to obey God and be sensitive to the leading of His Holy Spirit. To understand two great mysteries revealed to us in the New Testament are first, the good news of the gospel, and second, believing Jews and believing Gentiles now form one body – the Church. To encourage every Christian to diligently seek *“the mind of Christ”* in every situation of life!

DIGGING DEEPER INTO GOD'S WORD (BIBLE STUDY)

Part I: Paul's ministry - a demonstration of the power of God through the indwelling Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 2:1-5)

1. Young Saul of Tarsus was educated in Jerusalem under the teaching of the famous Jewish rabbi Gamaliel. On the road to Damascus while persecuting Christians, Saul was radically converted to Christ. Saul (whose name was later changed to Paul) was called by Jesus to be his Apostle to the Gentiles; Paul would become the world's greatest evangelist and write 13 of the 27 books found in the New Testaments. Even with all of these credentials, how did Paul feel about himself (**vs. 1**)? What did the Corinthians think of Paul? (See **2 Cor. 10:10**) Have you ever doubted your own ability to speak publically? Why? What other famous people in the Bible struggled with public speaking? (See **Exod. 4:10; Jer. 1:5-6**) Did God use them anyways?

2. According to **verse 2**, what was the heart of Paul's message whenever and wherever he preached? Why did Paul focus on Christ crucified? (See **1 Cor. 15:3-4; John 3:16; Rom. 5:8-10; Acts 4:12**) Why is it important for us to focus on Scripture when preaching or teaching today instead of tickling the listener's ears? (See **Isa. 55:11; Rom 1:16**)

3. In **verse 3** we learn that Paul experienced weakness, fear and much trembling during his time in ministry. Why? Have you ever had to suffer for your faith? According to **2 Cor. 11:22-28**, how much did Paul have to suffer for his faith in Christ? Why do you think Paul pressed on in spite of this suffering? Do you feel a burden for the lost?

4. The Corinthians as Greeks were impressed by rhetorical eloquence, intellectualism and philosophy; but not Paul. What can we learn about Paul's preaching style from **verse 4**? (See **1 Cor. 1:17-18, 23-24**) Paul was not concerned about the accolades of man, he cared more about demonstrating the power of God to the people he was preaching to. How have you seen God's power demonstrated in your life and ministry?

5. What are some of the dangers of a charismatic leader overseeing a church (**vs. 5**)? Have you ever made the mistake of putting your focus on man rather than God? What happened as a result? What principle do we learn from John the Baptist in **John 3:30**? How can we apply this principle to our lives today?

Part II: The wisdom of God and the mystery hidden throughout the ages now revealed (1 Cor. 2:6-13)

1. When Paul wrote he was speaking "*wisdom among those who are mature*," he implied he was speaking spiritual things to born-again believers (**vs. 6**). Have you ever had anyone say to you that the cross of Christ makes absolutely no sense to them? Why is the crucifixion of Christ everything to a believer while it is foolishness to an unbeliever? (See **2 Cor. 4:3-4**)

2. Define the word "*mystery*" (**vs. 7**). (See Dictionary) What is a "*mystery*" in the New Testament sense? What are some of the Old Testament mysteries revealed in the New? (See **Rom. 16:25-27; 1 Cor. 15:51-53; Eph. 3:4-6; 5:31-32; Col. 1:26-27; 1 Tim. 3:16**) According to **vs. 7**, when did God ordain the hidden wisdom that was revealed for our glory? (See **Eph. 1:4; Rom. 8:29-30**)

3. **Verse 8** may have meant either "*human rulers*" or "*rulers in the spiritual realm.*" Who do you think Paul was referring to? Do you think Herod and Pontius Pilate would have allowed Jesus to be crucified had they known who he was?

4. What Satan thought was his greatest victory (the cross) turned into his greatest defeat (**vs. 8**). Do you think Satan would have changed his mind had he known the outcome? What do we learn about Satan from this miscalculation? What incredible truth does **verse 8** teach us about the Lord Jesus Christ? (**See Psa. 24:7-10**)

5. Paul quotes **Isa. 64:4** in **verse 9**. In the context, Paul is relating the gospel message to Israel's freeing from the 70-year Babylonian captivity. For 70-years the Israelites were in captivity because of their sin against God. What kind of bondage are unbelievers in today? (**See Rom. 3:23; 5:8-10; 6:23**)

6. **Verse 9** is often quoted at memorial services today as describing the beauty of heaven; it is not. **Verse 9** describes the beauty of the Jesus Christ and God's grace in freeing us from sin. When did you first realize you were a sinner in need of a Savior? How has coming to Christ changed your life?

7. How can we understand the deep truths of Scripture today (**vs. 10**)? Who is able to understand and illuminate "*the deep things of God*" (**vs. 11**)? What does the word "*theology*" mean? (See Dictionary) Why do you think so many people look upon "*theology*" and "*Bible doctrine*" in a negative light today?

8. According to **verses 12 & 13**, how does the Holy Spirit assist us today? What do we learn about the Holy Spirit from the Shoreline Community Church "*Statement of Faith*": "We believe the Holy Spirit is one in essence with the Father and Son (**Deut. 6:4**), yet different in role. We believe the Holy Spirit was sent by the Father and the Son (**John 14:26;16:7**) to convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment (**John 16:8-11**). He is called the Spirit of Christ (**Rom.8:9; 1 Pet. 1:11**) and also the Spirit of truth (**John 16:13**). The Holy Spirit has been active in creation (**Gen. 1:2**), revelation (**Is. 61:1-3**) empowerment (**Ex. 31:2-6**), and inward renewal (**Ps. 51:10-12**). The Spirit regenerates (**John 3:5-8**), baptizes (**1 Cor. 12:13**), enlightens (**Eph. 1:17,18**), teaches (**John 14:26**), sanctifies (**Gal. 5:16-18**), seals (**Eph. 1:13,14**), counsels (**John**

16:7), and transforms the lives of believers into Christ-likeness (**Gal. 5:22,23**). The work of the Holy Spirit is to glorify Jesus by showing His disciples who He is (**John 16:7-15**). We believe the Holy Spirit empowers each believer for ministry (**Acts 1:7,8**) and is the giver of spiritual gifts (**Rom. 12:6-8; 1 Cor. 12:7-11; 1 Pet. 4:10,11**). The Holy Spirit is the Comforter (**John 14:16 KJV**) who helps us in our weaknesses by interceding for us when we are too weak and discouraged to pray (**Rom. 8:26,27**)." Do any of these roles surprise you? If so, which ones?

Part III: The natural man does not receive the things of God, but the regenerate man has the mind of Christ (1 Cor. 2:14-16)

1. According to **verse 14**, will "*the natural man*" (*unregenerate man*) receive the things of the Spirit of God? Why or why not? (**See John 3:3; Rom 8:6-8**) What prerequisite has to occur before a person comes to faith in Christ? (**See John 1:12-13; 3:3; 6:44, 65; Acts 13:47-48; 16:31**)
2. The Bible teaches us right from wrong. Why is it critical for us to spend time quality time in God's Word each day (**vs. 15**)? How has the Bible become a guide for your life? What practices have helped you grow spiritually? Should it bother us if unbelievers look down on us because of our faith in Christ?
3. What are some ways that you've seen Christians use their past experiences before coming to Christ to minister to unbelievers today (**vs. 14**)? What past experiences can you turn around and use for God's glory today?
4. **Verse 16** begins with a quote from **Isa. 40:13** taken from the Septuagint, the Greek version of the Old Testament. What is the obvious answer to both Isaiah's and Paul's question? What does having "*the mind of Christ*" mean to you? Each Christian should be growing spiritually. Do you find yourself growing spiritually? Are you thinking and acting more and more like Jesus?

MINER'S CORNER ~ *Manna to live by!*

- It does not require great intellectual or rhetorical skills to be used by God, just a willing heart and a trusting spirit!
- The power to change lives is not found in the preacher; the power is in the Word of God!
- *“The Word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” (Hebrews 4:12)*
- Although we are to respect our spiritual leaders, we should never idolize them!
- Salvation is a gift from God; the glory belongs to Him!
- The mystery hidden throughout the ages but revealed by Paul was that in Christ both believing Jews and believing Gentiles form one body, the church.
- As Christians, we should strive toward growing spiritually and having *“the mind of Christ”* in every situation!