

First Corinthians
Chapter Two
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1Cor 2:1 “And when I came to you, brethren, I did not come with superiority of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God.

1Cor 2:2 For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.

1Cor 2:3 And I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling.

1Cor 2:4 And my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power,

1Cor 2:5 that your faith should not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God.”

Reading these verses we need to remember the state of the society of Corinth when Paul first went there. Some of the details were presented at my introduction to chapter one. It was a fearful place for a new person to enter. He did not come to them as some great orator or philosopher for Christianity is not about rules, regulations and philosophies that one can learn and then practice to become a follower of Jesus. All Paul had to do was to present to them the true picture of the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus. God causes people to be born again so that they can believe, trust, and obey. We are not sure exactly what demonstrations of the Spirit and of power Paul presented to the people but, at this stage of development, God was doing miracles as demonstrations that Paul and others were His apostles and not merely men. If their faith had rested merely upon some wisdom structure then someone else could come along and present some other philosophy that might make the people change their allegiance. But the faith of a Christian is not something anyone can develop or that someone can give to someone else. Christian faith is a gift of God that enables the recipient to believe, trust, and be a true disciple of Jesus Christ.

People tend to be impressed by someone with human charisma and oratory ability. A recent U.S. president is a good example. When someone like that makes a presentation people tend to not even care much about the message! Perhaps contrasting the “popular” president with one who is not so charismatic and not such a great orator makes my point! Paul wanted to be certain that the people were clearly hearing the Gospel message. Paul has been described by some to have been short, bald, bow-legged, and with a hook nose! If that was his physical appearance then people would not be carried away with his appearance!

1Cor 2:6 “Yet we do speak wisdom among those who are mature; a wisdom, however, not of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are passing away;

1Cor 2:7 but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, the hidden wisdom, which God predestined before the ages to our glory;

1Cor 2:8 the wisdom which none of the rulers of this age has understood; for if they had understood it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory;

1Cor 2:9 but just as it is written, "Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, And which have not entered the heart of man, All that God has prepared for those who love Him."

1Cor 2:10 For to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God.

1Cor 2:11 For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man, which is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God."

Paul here changes to using "we" as he is referring to the messages by all the Apostles and not just by his messages. Paul is not ignoring the worldly wise people for God has chosen people of all types and talents. But for all people, even the wise, he speaks of a wisdom that is above this world and that is not understandable by even the wisest unless God has acted first to cause them to be born again. The soil must be prepared before the seeds are planted and for humans the preparing of the soil is for the person to be born again and implanted with faith. The word translated mystery does not mean some type of riddle that some person can solve by applying his mind to the problem. This type of mystery is one that cannot be solved without the direct intervention of God. God's wisdom has been hidden since before the foundation of the world and can be only perceived by God first acting on the person to give him the faith needed to understand. If any of the rulers of the world had understood God's wisdom then Jesus would not have had to be crucified. Jesus referred to this ignorance also:

Luke 23:34 "But Jesus was saying, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing." And they cast lots, dividing up His garments among themselves."

Paul gives Jesus the highest possible title: "The Lord of Glory". The exact origin of the quotation in verse nine is unknown but probably is a loose interpretation of

Isaiah 64:4 "For from of old they have not heard nor perceived by ear, Neither has the eye seen a God besides Thee, Who acts in behalf of the one who waits for Him."

In verses 10-14 Paul speaks of the Spirit six times to emphasize that the revelation of the Gospel is totally given by the Spirit. The Holy Spirit searches all things and knows our thoughts and how specifically we need to be taught the Gospel. The Holy Spirit brings our spirit to life and gives us the revelation of the mystery of God. Paul also here clearly identifies the Holy Spirit as God.

1Cor 2:12 "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things freely given to us by God,

1Cor 2:13 which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words.

1Cor 2:14 But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.

1Cor 2:15 But he who is spiritual appraises all things, yet he himself is appraised by no man.

1Cor 2:16 For who has known the mind of the Lord, that he should instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ.”

Paul clearly states that we are indwelt by the Holy Spirit for the reason that we might know what God has preordained to be freely given to His children. Those who receive this knowledge are also obligated to speak of it to others. We are also to teach the spiritual things with the spiritual words. In other words Paul is telling us to be very careful in our explaining and interpretation of the Word of God. Scripture is to be interpreted in the light of other Scripture. Without the Holy Spirit we have no basis for discernment. The transmission of the message of God is on a spiritual wavelength and only those whose receivers are capable of the same tuning can receive and understand the message of God. A human cannot see in the IR region of the electromagnetic spectrum and a person only equipped with worldly equipment cannot receive the spiritual message. I have heard many people proclaim the things of Jesus to be foolishness and we read many letters to the editor of people also freely proclaiming their lack of a proper receiver. Only God can equip a person properly for spiritual reception. We can yell as loud and as eloquently as possible at the back of a deaf person and he will not hear us.

A person indwelt by the Holy Spirit can now judge by the basis of God's will but he cannot be judged by the non-spiritual person for there is no common ground between them regarding spiritual matters. I have sometimes become very frustrated at someone not being able to understand me when I am talking spiritual matters but such is very normal.

Verse 16 is a quotation from the following:

Isaiah 40:13 “Who has directed the Spirit of the Lord, Or as His counselor has informed Him?”

We cannot instruct God but now we have the mind of God and we now can see **everything** from His vantage point. The working out of this viewing will take the rest of our life as we yield to the sanctification process but that is our charge. We need to always try to see everything from God's vantage point even though we are still a bit limited because we do not know the motive of God in all situations. I will not be able to clearly understand worldly events until I am glorified even though God has given me the mind of Christ.

References

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