

1st Corinthians Chapter 2.

The first Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians.

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Chapter verse 2

And I Brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom declaring unto you the Testimony of God.

Paul studied secular learning at Tarsus of Cilicia, this was before he became a Christian. As a teacher of the law, he learnt different ornate styles of delivery and attitude of pose and elocution so that he could deliver a persuasive and compelling style of teaching in the synagogue. The philosophers we spoke about earlier would have been taught similar methods in similar schools. They too practiced the highly sophisticated method of public speaking that was characteristic of the era. Some evidently tried to expound the 'Gospel' in this manner which failed to regenerate the world let alone change men's hearts, showing that a super human element was missing from their preaching namely the Holy Spirit.

Paul, in his letter tells the Church at Corinth that he came to them not with excellency of speech or great wisdom, not with art of rhetoric used by their own philosophers with enticing words of man's wisdom but simply with the enabling power of the Holy Spirit.

Verse 2

For I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and Him Crucified.

Paul was satisfied that the gospel of Jesus Christ alone could make men wise unto salvation. Paul was determined in his heart to cultivate no other knowledge and to teach no other message than that of Jesus Christ and Him crucified as the foundation of all truth and wisdom.

Verse 3/4

And I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling.4. And my speech and my preaching were not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power.

Paul's enemies in the church at Corinth spoke of him with contempt. Nicephorus, a fourteenth century writer describes Paul as follows: 'Paul was a little man crooked, and almost bent like a bow with a pale countenance long and wrinkled; a bald head; his eyes full of fire and benevolence; his beard long thick and interspersed with grey hairs' Nicephorus says Paul was weak looking, credulous and worthy of no regard. The Lycaonians took him for Mercury the god of eloquence; attributed to Paul by his persuasive elocution which leads us to deduct that Paul may not have had an impediment of speech. However Paul approached preaching with fear and trembling which was completely contrary to the sages of the day who were full of self confident puffed up eloquence. These orators spoke in the synagogue and market places with great panache but with one aim only: to gain celebrity status and popularity at any cost. Paul on the other hand preached Christ and Him Crucified under the power of the Holy Spirit with signs following which changed men's hearts and made them new creatures in Christ Jesus which is something the eloquent waffle of the philosophers could never do. (Acts 6: 10) (Rom.15: 18-19)

Verse 6

Howbeit we speak wisdom among them who are perfect yet not the wisdom of this world nor of the princes of this world that come to nought. We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery even the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world unto our glory.

The wisdom of God is infinitely higher than the wisdom of this world. Those who sought to know and experience the wisdom of God Paul calls perfect. That perfection is not a perfection that is flawless or without defect, instead it is a perfection that comes only from the truly superior heavenly wisdom that Paul talked about and preached about. Paul's perfection and our perfection is in knowing Jesus Christ.

Verse 7

But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery even the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world unto our glory.

The wisdom of God was ordained before the world was created. It was always in the mind of God to make a way of escape for His creation when they fell into sin which He knew they would. That wisdom was to send His only Son Jesus Christ to die in the place of mankind so that man could accept that fact and believe in the name of Jesus and receive eternal life. What would have happened to man if God was not so forward looking. But in His wisdom God made a way for you and me? None of the rulers of this world knew of this wisdom and if they did know the Bible says they would not have crucified the Lord. According to 1 Peter 1: 10 - 12 the Prophets have sought to fathom the mystery of salvation, even the Angels wanted to know and understand the wisdom of God but it was hidden until now and by the preaching of the Gospel it has been made clear.

Romans 16:25-26

Now to Him Who is of power to establish you according to my Gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery which was kept secret since the world began. But is now made manifest and by the scriptures of the Prophets according to the Commandment of the everlasting God made known to all nations for the Obedience of Faith.

Please don't give up because this is written in old English. If you want to know what it says, study it, read it again slowly and ask the Holy Spirit to help you understand it.

It is God who has the power to establish us as Christians according to His Gospel. This is made possible by the preaching of Jesus Christ and Him Crucified. This Mystery was kept secret since the world began, it was not revealed until it was needed. But when revealed it fully counteracted the effect of Satan's intervention which brought sin into the world. God had pre-empted this act by Satan and made manifest His plan and used His scriptures being preached by the Prophets to all nations and peoples showing them the way of eternal life through Jesus Christ God's Son if they believe on Him. Thank you God for your wisdom and thank you Jesus for being our sacrifice. I wished this was preached in our churches today. It is preaching Christ Crucified and preaching the Cross that brings salvation and it is salvation that saves mankind from Hell.

Verse 11/12/13

For what man knows the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God know no man but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world but the Spirit which is of God that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

We are all earthly vessels and very much alike. It is possible for a man to know the thoughts of another man. I often know what my wife is thinking and often say what she is about to say and she is the same with me, we are one together. But neither of us fully knows the mind of God, only the Holy Spirit knows the mind of God and it is only through the promptings of the Holy Spirit we can know in part the mind of God. The best way to really know God is through His Word the Bible.

Verse 14/15/16

But the natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God for they are foolishness to him neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned but he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is judged of no man, for who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ.

This verse talks about the man who is unsaved, without Christ and therefore thinks and speaks in the natural with no spiritual values or discernment. Spiritual things are foolishness to him much like the philosophers we read about in Chapter 1. This is quite understandable really, when you meet a fellow Christian and you start a conversation it will not be long before the things of God are mentioned to be completely understood by the other. When you start a conversation with a non-believer as soon as you mention Jesus you can feel and see how uncomfortable he gets. That is the Holy Spirit in you and not in your friend. When we become a Christian we are born-again we take on the mind of Christ and behave,

think and act as Jesus would. When in the company of unbelievers it takes very little time for the conversation to become sordid, cheap and sometimes disgusting. We feel uncomfortable if we witness these types of conversation because we have the mind of Christ... or should have! But on the other hand if 'Christ is in us' is visible on the outside, then these sordid conversations never gain any momentum because without realising it the unsaved participants are constrained by the presence of God in their midst.

Verse 16

For who has known the Mind of the Lord? That he may instruct him.

The carnal man, even if he is a learned philosopher or teacher will not have the mind of God and therefore will not be able to teach others about the Mind of God. The Christian however, will be able to teach others of the mind of God simply because he has received that mind at salvation. God wants us to get to know Him and we do that by prayer and reading His Word. We also have the help of the Holy Spirit to enlighten us to the ways of God. Whenever our spirit is linked with His Spirit greater understanding is gained. It is difficult to explain to anyone who has not got newness of life in Jesus, and our verse says so 'That he may instruct him' should be translated 'That he may teach him', that is he may teach the mind of God to others, not instruct God.

Paul concludes, but we have the mind of Christ which is the mind of God, that being so we are able, with the help of the Holy Spirit to look at things on a much higher level just as Jesus would see things because we have the same Spirit as Jesus.

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Be blessed

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