

1Co04 – World’s Wisdom or God’s Plan – 1 Corinthians 2:1-16  
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Open your Bibles. Title of the message, “*World’s Wisdom or God’s Plan.*” We’re in 1 Corinthians 2:1-16.

Today we continue our thought from last week about the divine wisdom of the Cross of Christ. If you’re reading NLT the section heading for last week was “*The Wisdom of God.*” And the section heading for this week is “*Paul’s Message of Wisdom.*” So we’re really continuing today the direct contrast between the wisdom of the world and divine plan of God in the Cross of Christ. It’s a radical and direct contrast.

Let’s pray. *Lord Jesus, as we approach your Word, we need your mind. Lord we understand that we can’t wrestle with this in our flesh, in our human understanding, in our own wisdom. We need your mind, Jesus. And so we pray as we approach it that you would prepare us to see, to hear and to receive and that we would leave here knowing more about you as you reveal it to us through your Word and by your Spirit, in your name, Jesus, amen.*

So, Paul is picking up right where he left off, *contrasting* the message of Christ with the wisdom of the world.

**1 Corinthians 2:1-2 (NLT)**

*1 When I first came to you, dear brothers and sisters, I didn’t use lofty words and impressive wisdom to tell you God’s secret plan (God’s testimony).*

*2 For I decided that while I was with you I would forget everything except Jesus Christ, the one who was crucified.*

Verse two is a well known scripture and the ESV uses the classic wording.

**1 Corinthians 2:2 (ESV)**

*2 For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.*

Paul says – when I first came to you – I made a commitment to *not* use lofty words and impressive wisdom to tell you about God’s secret plan (the message of the cross). Instead, I committed to know *nothing* among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.

As we said before, Paul had just experienced the high intellect of Athens, not far from Corinth and Corinth itself was an intellectual and culturally progressive city. The Greeks *loved* any good philosophical conversation and they loved to compare philosophical thoughts.

So, Paul knew he could not come into this progressive, intellectual culture with a new religious philosophy or idea. Paul made it clear in our message last week. The message of the cross is the *farthest* thing from a religious philosophy or idea. Jesus Christ and him crucified is the very power of God, designed and delivered *by God* for the salvation of all who would believe.

And so Paul came not to debate or compare, but instead 1 Corinthians 2:3-4 says,

**1 Corinthians 2:3-4 (NLT)**

***3 I came to you in weakness—timid and trembling.***

***4 And my message and my preaching were very plain. Rather than using clever and persuasive speeches, I relied only on the power of the Holy Spirit.***

The word “weakness” here may actually be referring to a physical weakness. Paul became weak and timid and trembling. Maybe it was from physical trials or maybe from his difficulties in Athens and prior to Athens. So instead of “matching intellect” in Corinth, Paul made the message of the cross very plain and simple and he relied on the power of the Holy Spirit to do the work and we should be doing the exact same thing.

**The Message of Jesus Christ and him crucified is NOT about**

Our *Success*

Our *Circumstances*

Our *Ability to Talk*, or *to Compare*, or *to Debate*

The Message of the Cross is about US  
being UNITED (made one with)  
the life of Jesus Christ.

In 2 Corinthians 4:7 Paul says,

**2 Corinthians 4:7 (ESV)**

***7 But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us.***

We are the (cracked) jars of clay. The treasure is the life of Jesus Christ IN us and so we can't boast of anything human at all. We can only say, ***“The POWER of my salvation – and the strength of my life - is the life of Jesus Christ living IN ME - Period”***

And if we – as the church – could demonstrate that one truth in our lives we would see much less comparison of religions and much more genuine salvation.

So *why* did Paul focus only on Jesus Christ and him crucified (verse 2) and *why* did he trust only in the power of the Holy Spirit (verse 4)?

### **1 Corinthians 2:5 (NLT)**

***5 I did this so you would trust not in human wisdom but in the power of God.***

Paul focused only on Jesus Christ and him crucified and he trusted only in the power of the Holy Spirit... so that the church would not trust in human wisdom at all, but only in the Power of God.

How are we doing as a “Church Culture” in that area?

Is the Church (in general) really *rejecting* human wisdom and trusting *only* in the power of God? We have to really consider this. Is the Church looking more and more like an Oprah Winfrey show OR are we trusting more and more in Jesus Christ crucified and in the power of God *alone*?

It’s an important question to ask because the power of God and human wisdom are ANTITHETICAL. “Antithetical” means two things that are directly opposed to each other. Our *salvation* in Christ cannot be compared to human wisdom because it is *not human*, it is *divine*.

Through our faith in Jesus Christ and him crucified we have the power of God living inside of us. The Bible is clear; when we receive Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord we receive the *life and power* of God in the person of the Holy Spirit to *live* in us.

### **1 Corinthians 6:19 (NLT)**

***19 Don’t you realize that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by God? . . .***

If you are saved today – you have the life and power of God living inside – you in the person of the Holy Spirit and we cannot “compare” that power of God living inside of us to *any form* of human wisdom.

We are not building our house of faith on the shifting sands of human wisdom. We’re building our house of faith on the solid ROCK of the life of Jesus Christ living inside of us.

Fully embracing that truth is the *only rock* you’ll be able to stand on when the world brings its storms of criticism and challenges to your door.

Being able to stand against the world’s (so called) wisdom is what Paul wanted for the new church in Corinth and it’s what God wants for us – today.

But, *that* does *not* mean that there is *not* wisdom in our salvation. We have *in our salvation* the greatest wisdom of all, although it is still in *direct contrast* to the world's wisdom.

Look at what Paul says in 1 Corinthians 2:6-7.

**1 Corinthians 2:6-7 (NLT)**

***6 Yet when I am among mature believers, I do speak with words of wisdom, but not the kind of wisdom that belongs to this world or to the rulers of this world, who are soon forgotten.***

***7 No, the wisdom we speak of is the mystery of God—his plan that was previously hidden, even though he made it for our ultimate glory before the world began.***

What great verses... Paul says, *when I am among mature believers, I DO speak with words of wisdom, but not the kind of wisdom that belongs to this world*

*No, the wisdom we speak of is the mystery of God—his plan that was previously hidden,*

In the Bible a mystery is something that God has not yet revealed and the greatest wisdom that creation will ever know is *in* God's mysterious plan that was previously hidden up until Jesus Christ and the message of the cross.

But then, look at the end of verse 7 (NLT). *even though* [God] *made* [this plan] *for our ultimate glory before the world began* . . . (before the world began!!)

There is *no* wisdom in this world that can compare to the divine mystery of God... which is God's plan for our salvation and for the redemption of *all* creation from the fall.

And then 1 Corinthians 2:8.

**1 Corinthians 2:8 (NLT)**

***8 But the rulers of this world have not understood it(God's Plan); if they had, they would not have crucified our glorious Lord.***

There is some debate WHO the "*rulers of this world*" are. Are they the human rulers that ordered the crucifixion? Or are they the spiritual rulers who instigated it? Either way they *did not* see the plan of God coming and they certainly *did not see* the highest divine wisdom in this plan of God.

**1 Corinthians 2:9 (NLT)**

***9 That is what the Scriptures mean when they say, "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has imagined what God has prepared for those who love him."***

What an incredible statement!!! ***“No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has imagined what God has prepared for those who love him.”***

This divine and mysterious plan of God... This divine and mysterious plan of God is *out of control!* No human wisdom could ever even imagine it. The life and power of God living inside a broken and sinful man or woman. No human wisdom could ever dream up *that plan.*

No human wisdom could *ever* figure out *that plan.* This incredible miracle of the plan of God could never be figured out. It had to be revealed by God’s Spirit.

Look at 1 Corinthians 2:10.

**1 Corinthians 2:10 (NLT)**

***10 But it was to us that God revealed these things by his Spirit. For his Spirit searches out everything and shows us God’s deep secrets.***

*That* is why Paul focused on Jesus Christ and him crucified and trusted in the power of the Holy Spirit alone. Because you can’t explain the miracle of our identification with Christ, and all that means. But God will reveal it and all that it means to anyone who truly desires to know it.

Once we *are* saved and have the life of God living inside of us in the person of the Holy Spirit we can continue to know more of the incredible things God has freely given us and to explain this, Paul is going to make a comparison that we’ve really got to follow to understand.

**1 Corinthians 2:11-12 (NLT)**

***11 No one can know a person’s thoughts except that person’s own spirit, and no one can know God’s thoughts except God’s own Spirit.***

***12 And we have received God’s Spirit (not the world’s spirit), so we can know the wonderful things God has freely given us.***

Paul is simply saying that just like no one can truly know your thoughts except your own spirit. In the same way – ***no one can know God’s thoughts except God’s own Spirit.***

But here is the great miracle (verse 12). Because we have received God’s Spirit (the Holy Spirit) who is living inside us... we can know more and more of the wonderful things God has freely given us. There is no human wisdom that can come up with that incredible, miraculous plan for us to know God.

And Paul continues in 1 Corinthians 2:13.

### **1 Corinthians 2:13 (NLT)**

***13 When we tell you these things, we do not use words that come from human wisdom. Instead, we speak words given to us by the Spirit, using the Spirit's words to explain spiritual truths.***

We are not using human wisdom to try to understand an infinite God. Instead we are receiving truths that are given to us by God's Holy Spirit as the writers of the Bible *use the Holy Spirit's words to explain spiritual truths* (verse 13).

Paul is simply trying to say the only way we can receive God's divine wisdom is by having God's Holy Spirit living inside of us who is given to us through faith in Christ and the work of Christ on the cross.

And so Paul says in 1 Corinthians 2:14,

### **1 Corinthians 2:14 (NLT)**

***14 But people who aren't spiritual can't receive these truths from God's Spirit. It all sounds foolish to them and they can't understand it, for only those who are spiritual can understand what the Spirit means.***

God is making it clear here if you don't have God's Spirit *in you*, you can't receive God's truth *from* God's Spirit because God's truths are in direct contrast to human wisdom.

The Holy Spirit is given to you by simple faith. It's so simple. You don't have to understand all of who God is. You have to have faith in what Christ has done. And then as the Holy Spirit takes up residence in your life, now you can begin to understand spiritual things, because you have the Holy Spirit in you – you are spiritual (verse 14).

So, if you don't first have faith (to receive God's Spirit) then God's truths sound like foolishness to you – not because they are hard to understand. It's because you are using the wrong *decoder*. You're trying to decode God's divine mysteries with a decoder you got free in a Cheerios box. You must receive the right decoder to receive revelation truth from God's Spirit. That decoder is the Holy Spirit *living inside you*.

Romans 8:9 says anyone who is truly saved through faith in Jesus Christ *has* the Holy Spirit living inside them.

- So
- 1) Put your Full Faith in Jesus Christ (and God's plan)
  - 2) Receive the Holy Spirit DECODER
  - 3) And THEN you'll receive God's spiritual truths

So, Paul is going to close with these thoughts, with one last important truth in 1 Corinthians 2:15.

**1 Corinthians 2:15 (NLT)**

***15 Those who are spiritual can evaluate (or make judgments on) *all things*, but they themselves cannot be evaluated by others.***

In the context of this chapter we are clearly talking about receiving or understanding spiritual things and there is nothing to indicate the context goes beyond that in these last two verses.

So Paul is saying *Those who are spiritual can evaluate (or make judgments on) **all** (SPIRITUAL) *things*, but they themselves cannot be evaluated (Spiritually) **by others** (meaning by unbelievers).*

Then verse 16 confirms this understanding.

**1 Corinthians 2:16 (NLT)**

***16 For, “Who can know the Lord’s thoughts? Who knows enough to teach him?” But we understand these things, for we have the mind of Christ.***

Incredibly Paul is saying *we can know* the Lord’s thoughts because we *have* the mind of Christ in the person of the Holy Spirit who lives in us.

We’ve now gone so far beyond human wisdom. We’re talking about knowing the Lord’s thoughts and having the mind of Christ... through the person of the Holy Spirit who lives in us.

You certainly cannot compare that with any kind of human wisdom. Guys, we’ve got to stop trying to understand the mysterious plan of God with our Cheerios box decoder ring of human wisdom. The miraculous and mysterious plan of God is Christ living in us in the person of the Holy Spirit.

So first we put our faith in the message of the cross which is Jesus Christ and him crucified and *then through* our faith the Holy Spirit will take up residence in our lives. Then, through the Holy Spirit living in us, we can know the Lord’s thoughts and we can even have the mind of Christ in us.

That is an offer that cannot be compared to *any* worldly wisdom.

Let’s pray. *Lord Jesus, you just leave us awestruck. Your plan, your wisdom, the mystery of your plan from before the foundation of the world, just leaves us in awe. We have nothing to do but receive or reject your plan. There’s nothing that compares to it, there’s nothing that we can even consider on the same plane with it.*

And so if you've never received that simple plan, that divine mystery of Christ crucified in your place and on your behalf, then just do it now. Right where you are, say "*Lord, I never really got it. I didn't understand that first I need you to take up residence in my life. I need your life inside of me. And then by your Spirit you'll reveal the deeper mysteries to me. And so Lord, I receive you. Come into my life. Thank you for dying for my sins. Please make me right and please fill me with your life that I would know you, that I would know your thoughts, that I would have the mind of Christ. And then transform me, Lord, to the point that I would be a witness to that – the simple life changing power of the message of the cross. And I pray that I would rely on the Holy Spirit trusting in you, to transform me and use me as a witness to transform others. I give you my life today, Lord. Please come alive in me. For your glory and in your name, Jesus, amen.*