

1 Corinthians

Higher Intelligence

Series Overview

Paul's first letter to the church in Corinth is a case-study in what makes an unhealthy church. In this series, we'll explore what made that church so unhealthy as a guide to becoming the healthy church God has called us to be.

Sermon Introduction

Depending on who you ask, A.I. is either the greatest threat to humanity's existence... or a soon-to-be form of higher intelligence with the potential to solve all the world's problems and usher in an era of human flourishing never before imagined. (Sounds nice.) But the intelligence great enough to save the world isn't something we can either solve for or create in an algorithm. A.I. can't save the world. We need "the mind of Christ" (1 Cor. 2:16).

Passage: 1 Corinthians 2:6-16 (NIV)

1Cor. 2:6 We do, however, speak a message of wisdom among the mature, but not the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing.

1Cor. 2:7 No, we speak of God's secret wisdom, a wisdom that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began.

1Cor. 2:8 None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

1Cor. 2:9 However, as it is written:

"No eye has seen,
no ear has heard,
no mind has conceived
what God has prepared for those who love him"—

1Cor. 2:10 but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God.

1Cor. 2:11 For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man's spirit within him? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.

1Cor. 2:12 We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us.

1Cor. 2:13 This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words.

1Cor. 2:14 The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.

1Cor. 2:15 The spiritual man makes judgments about all things, but he himself is not subject to any man's judgment:

1Cor. 2:16 "For who has known the mind of the Lord

that he may instruct him?"

But we have the mind of Christ.

Personal Reflection and Group Discussion Questions

1. Read the passage. What stood out to you? Was there anything that you found surprising or confusing?
2. In vv. 6-10, Paul contrasts the "wisdom of this age" with God's wisdom. How do you think God's wisdom differs from most of what passes for wisdom today?
3. Why do you think Paul says that the "rulers of this age" couldn't understand God's wisdom (v. 8)? What is it about God's wisdom that doesn't fit with how most powerful people see the world?
4. Read the end of v. 10-v. 14. According to Paul, what's the criteria for knowing the "deep things of God"? What (or *who*) do you need? Why?
5. The principle Paul's expounding is that faith *precedes* understanding, not the other way around. What do you think about this principle? Can you think of a time when you took something on faith and only later understood it to be true?
6. In v. 15, Paul says that a spiritual (or mature) person is not subject to any other person's judgment. What do you think Paul means?
7. To "have the mind of Christ" (v. 16) isn't so much about *what* you think as it is about *how* you think. What do you think it means to think like Jesus?
8. Pick a specific aspect of your life: a relationship, a situation at work, something that has you worried or stressed. How might having "the mind of Christ" help you this week?

Prayer

Often a position of submission helps us physically connect with the spiritual reality of meeting God. A posture of kneeling with open hands can demonstrate our willingness to submit to God's power.

- Praise God that his wisdom is wiser than the world's greatest wisdom.
- Confess any decisions you've made or actions you've taken that reflect the world's wisdom—it's priorities, values, or beliefs—rather than God's.
- Thank him, that in his wisdom, Jesus made a way for our salvation and glory (vv. 7-8).
- Ask him to give you his perspective, his mindset, as you go about your week.