

THE POWER OF WISDOM (Part 5) (Rom. 16:25-27)

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~"I will walk into the EXPECTED END of God—by the power of Wisdom."

~When the Apostle Paul closes what is the magnum opus of Christian doctrine in the Bible, he literally breaks into song! And It's only right that he do so.

~How should you tie off the greatest story ever told? After walking through the grand reasons behind God's rescuing love for rebel sinners, only a doxology will do.

~So with a heart that is full and a mind on fire, Paul declares the words of **(Rom. 16:25-27)** "Now to Him who has power to strengthen you according to my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the sacred secret kept silent for long ages, but now revealed and made known through the prophetic Scriptures, according to the command of the eternal God, to advance the obedience of faith among all nations, to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to Him be the glory forever! Amen."

~Notice the in last phrases of the entire book of Romans, Paul emphasizes one attribute of God—His wisdom.

(Vs. 27) "To the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, be glory forever! Amen."

~My goal in this series has been to display before you the wisdom of God, so that you see it more clearly and admire Him more intensely and trust Him more firmly and therefore obey Him more consistently and joyfully.

A. God is infinitely wise.

~I want to unpack that for a moment and then we will see that flowing from that truth is a perspective-shaping, comfort-giving, anxiety-killing, prayer-inducing implication that will revolutionize your life if you will take it as your own.

~Wisdom sees the big picture, in focus, each part in its proper relationship to the rest.

~Wisdom is different from knowledge. You can have knowledge without wisdom. There are a lot of brilliant fools. But you cannot have wisdom without knowledge, because in order to discern the best way to achieve a goal, you have to be able to integrate, to fuse together all kinds of factors from various sources of knowledge and experience.

~Now, take up this attribute and think about God. And while you're connecting those dots, listen to the psalmist say of God, **(Ps. 147:5)** “His understanding is infinite.”

~Listen to **(Jeremiah 32:19)** pray to the “great and mighty God whose name is the Lord of Hosts, the One great in counsel and mighty in deed, whose eyes are on all the ways of the sons of men in order to give to each person according to his ways and the result of his deeds.”

~When **(Daniel 2:21-22)** described God's wisdom, he wrote, “He changes the times and seasons; He removes kings and establishes kings. He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding. He reveals the deep and hidden things; He knows what is in the darkness, and light dwells with Him.”

~Nothing's ever a mystery to God. He is never puzzled or confused or uncertain.

~Paul tries to talk about the wisdom of God, and when he does, it moves to praise:

(Rom. 11:33-36) “Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! How unsearchable His judgments and untraceable His ways! For who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been His counselor? Or who has ever first given to Him, and has to be repaid? For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.”

~What the apostle is saying is that God's wisdom is very deep—so deep that His judgments are unsearchable to our earthly minds.

~Meaning...I can't get there from here; it's beyond me. God's wisdom is so deep that His ways are untraceable without the aid of His Word and His Spirit.

~I can't follow what He's doing without being hopelessly over my head. It is so deep that no one has been or could be His counselor, ever.

B. In fact, the wisdom of God is so deep and so expansive that He does not and cannot increase in wisdom.

~The only way He could increase in wisdom is for something to come into God's mind that has not already come out of God's mind.

~But (**Romans 11:36**) insists that this cannot be done: for “from Him and through Him and to Him are all things.”

~So God's actions are always perfectly wise. There are no upgrades to His wisdom that are needed or even available.

~Think about this: **God is constantly synthesizing billions and billions of strands of data, drawn from all possible fields of knowledge and realms of experience, so that He holds every relevant factor in every situation with total and perfect knowledge.**

~He constantly weighs the facts, implications, costs, consequences, and how it fits into His purposes with flawless skill, so that what He does or wills is always the best possible move that can be made.

~And God does this all the time, without the least strain, and without crashing the system.

1. One life-altering implication of God's wisdom

(**Charles Ryrie**) “The wisdom of God tells us that God will bring about the best possible results, by the best possible means, for the most possible people, for the longest possible time.”

~What this implication from God's wisdom means is that whatever your life is like right now, **God is wisely and sovereignly ordering your circumstances to do something in you, through you, in your marriage, in your family, in your work, in your witness, and in your worship that could not be accomplished any other way.**

~If there was a better way to accomplish these purposes, then you would be experiencing those other circumstances instead of what you are right now.

~If there was a kinder, faster, more expedient way, God would be using it. So the circumstances you are in right now are exactly what you need for this period in your life.

~Let me ask you something: Would it change things for you if you firmly believed that the problem in your life that is pressing and difficult—the one you don't understand, that you chafe against, that makes you feel overwhelmed and ready to give up—that problem was orchestrated or allowed by an all-wise, loving Father to bring about the best possible, longest lasting results for His glory and your good?

~Would it make a difference if you understood that your life is not God's Plan B or Plan C—that it is always and only Plan A, designed specifically for you while you live in this fallen world?

~What if everything in your life was a part of His wise plan? What would happen to your anxiety level? How would that affect your confidence in God?

A. But it's right here where we push back.

~"I would love to believe that, but it doesn't add up in my life. You call what has happened to me the best possible circumstances for me right now? And it's going to produce the best possible outcome! What outcome is God shooting for? I lost my baby! My son was killed in a car wreck. The storm took everything I had. I got a pink slip. My husband beat me. You're telling me that this is the best! I can think of better ways toward better outcomes. I don't buy it!"

~All over this room, there are circumstances that defy any connection with this teaching.

~Those circumstances contradict phrases like “best possible” because they are awful, scary, and painful.

There are two things with which I want to plead with you to consider:

1. Remember that our experience of the wisdom of God comes in a fallen world.

~This is not the best of all possible worlds, but one that lies under the shadow of the Fall of man.

~All creation groans and travails under the mighty shock of the Fall, when sin entered this world and death by sin. In this present evil world, God's wisdom does not necessarily shield His children from sin or calamity, nor punish wicked people in their sin.

~Right now, in His wisdom, (Matt. 5:45) “For He makes His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.”

~But one day, all will be set right.

~You have His Word on that in places like (**Galatians 6:7**) where the Bible says, “Do not be deceived” (Don't be fooled by the delay in the full execution of God's perfect justice so that you think that He lets the wicked off the hook): “God is not mocked. For whatever a man sows he will also reap.”

~You can believe this: God will see to it in full on the day of His judgment.

2. Remember the wisdom of God in securing your salvation.

~Everything about God's plan to save us through Christ looked doomed to fail.

~A teenage girl in a stable in a little flea-bag town? A carpenter's son? And then consider the disciples Jesus chose to whom He would delegate His cause. Not exactly your top-of-the-class group.

~But the most foolish move of all was the crucifixion.

(I Corinthians 1:21-24) connects this for us: “For since, in God's wisdom, the world did not know God through wisdom” (In other words, God rejected the possibility of salvation by human intellect and wisdom) “... God was pleased to save those who believe through the foolishness of the message preached. For the Jews ask for signs and the Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to the Gentiles. Yet to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ is God's power and God's wisdom.”

~In God's infinite wisdom, He chose a way of salvation through Christ that looks totally insane to us.

~No one on earth would have come up with a plan involving the brutal murder of the Son of God for sinners.

~Yet at precisely the most foolish-looking moment, God's wisdom triumphs. And at the point of His greatest weakness, God's power is unleashed.

(Vs. 25) “Because God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength.”

~In God's all-wise plan, this was the perfect way to achieve the greatest goal.

~What goal? Skip to **(Vs. 31)** “Therefore, as it is written, 'The one who boasts must boast in the Lord.’”

~This is what His wisdom was aiming at. God chose us, purchased us, called us, and given to us everything else involving our salvation in such a way as to strip us of all self-congratulation and replace it with glorying only in the Lord.

~I make this point for this reason: you and I don't know enough to fathom why pain and suffering and injustice and brutality happens to us in this sin-wrecked world.

~Like Job, we come to God with our questions. But in the end, God simply points out that in the grand scope of things, we know nothing.

~When it comes to divine wisdom, we haven't been there and we haven't done that.

(A.W. Tozer), in *The Knowledge of the Holy*, wrote these words about God's wisdom in our lives: “To believe actively that our Heavenly Father constantly spreads around us providential circumstances that work for our present good and our everlasting well-being brings to the soul a veritable benediction. Most of us go through life praying a little, planning a little, jockeying for position, hoping but never being quite certain of anything, and always secretly afraid that we will miss the way. This is a tragic waste of truth and never gives rest to the heart. There is a better way. It is to repudiate our own wisdom and take instead the infinite wisdom of God... God has charged Himself with full responsibility for our eternal happiness and stands ready to take over the management of our lives the moment we turn in faith to Him.”

2. As Paul urged, we must seek to be wise about what is good and ignorant concerning evil: “I want you to be wise in what is good, and innocent in what

is evil.” (Romans 16:19)

~Wisdom is not “knowing good and evil,” Wisdom is knowing good FROM evil.

~We must learn to focus our desires on what is good and to discipline those desires which lead to our destruction:

(1 Cor. 10:6) “Now these things happened as examples for us, that we should not crave evil things, as they also craved.”

~You must remind yourself daily that your fleshly desires are evil—and if you feed those desires it will lead to Spiritual death.

(1 Pet. 2:11) “Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts, which wage war against the soul.”

(Ps. 42:1) “As the deer pants for the water brooks, So my soul pants for Thee, O God.”

(1 Pet. 2:1-2) “Therefore, putting aside all malice and all guile and hypocrisy and envy and all slander, like newborn babes, LONG FOR the pure milk of the word, that by it you may grow in respect to salvation.”

~Christians today seek to be wise, but all too often it is not God’s wisdom they seek.

A. We seem ignorant of the fact that there is a false wisdom which must be rejected:

(James 3:13-18) “Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show by his good behavior his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom. But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth. This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing. But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy. And the seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.”

(2 Cor. 1:12) “For our proud confidence is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in holiness and Godly sincerity, not in fleshly wisdom but in the grace of God, we have conducted ourselves in the world, and especially toward you.”

(Col. 2:23) “These are matters which have, to be sure, the appearance of wisdom in self-made religion and self-abasement and severe treatment of the body, but are of no value against fleshly indulgence.”

B. The wisdom of God and the “wisdom” of men are not the same; they are not compatible. They are in direct opposition to each other.

(1 Cor. 1:18-25) “For the word of the cross is to those who are perishing foolishness, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written, “I WILL DESTROY THE WISDOM OF THE WISE, AND THE CLEVERNESS OF THE CLEVER I WILL SET ASIDE.” Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not come to know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. For indeed Jews ask for signs, and Greeks search for wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block, and to Gentiles foolishness, but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.”

(1 Corinthians 2:1-7) “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. For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. And I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling. And my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God. 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; but we speak God’s wisdom in a mystery, the hidden wisdom, which God predestined before the ages to our glory.”

(Proverbs 2:6) “For the LORD gives wisdom; From His mouth come knowledge and understanding.”

(Prov. 8:12-21) “I, wisdom, dwell with prudence, And I find knowledge and discretion. **The fear of the LORD is to hate evil**; Pride and arrogance and the evil way, And the perverted mouth, I hate. Counsel is mine and sound wisdom; I am understanding, power is mine. By me kings reign, And rulers decree justice. By me princes rule, and nobles, All who judge rightly. I love those who love me; And those who diligently seek me will find me. Riches and honor are with me, Enduring wealth and righteousness. My fruit is better than gold, even pure gold, And my yield than choicest silver. I walk in the way of righteousness, In the midst of the paths of justice, to endow those who love me with wealth, that I may fill their treasuries.”

C. The English word wisdom is derived from an old Anglo-Saxon word meaning “to see” (hence also the origin of the term “I see” when one understands something).

~True wisdom is a “moral quality,” not necessarily a measure of intelligence... There are some very intelligent people in the world who do some very unwise things, while conversely there are some people of lesser intellectual ability who have wisdom that is superior to people with supposedly greater intelligence.

~Intelligence itself is manifested in two sometimes-conflicting forms, 1.) greater thinking power on one hand, and 2.) acquired knowledge on the other—activities that do not mean the same thing.

~In the Holy Bible, “wisdom” is used to translate the Hebrew word of the Old Testament pronounced (**kok-maw**), meaning to be wise in thought and deed, and the Greek word of the New Testament pronounced (**sof-ee-ah**) meaning clear, or wise.

~The Scriptures make plain that wisdom that is based upon the Word of God is the only true wisdom, while carnal “worldly” wisdom is nothing more than dead-end self-righteous vanity.

(Proverbs 14:12) “There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end

thereof are the ways of death.”

(1 Corinthians 3:19-20) “For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness. And again, The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain.”

(A. W. Tozer) “With the goodness of God to desire our highest welfare, the wisdom of God to plan it, and the power of God to achieve it, what do we lack? Surely we are the most favored of all creatures.”