

THE WISE AND LEARNED

“I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned....”
—MATTHEW 11:25

It was at the time of Jesus’ condemnation of unrepentant towns (Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum) that He prayed the above. The frustration of the “wise and learned” is in their assumption they might know God through what they have been taught.

It seems a fact that the great influences on our knowledge of God and godliness rarely, if ever, emanate from our theological schools. Paul’s own testimony was that the ‘surpassingly great revelations’ given him by God held the potential to lead him into arrogance, which is why God allowed the thorn in his flesh to keep him dependent on Him. Paul wrote of the danger in knowledge “puffing us up”, which he contrasted with the fact that “love builds us up”. (1 Corinthians 8:1) He tells the Corinthians believers, “Not many of you were wise by human standards... But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise...” (1:26-27).

The incredulity of the educated religious leaders when questioning the disciples, Peter and John, was contributed to by their realization they were ‘unschooled, ordinary men’ (Acts 4:13). This is not to play down the validity of academic investigation into spiritual things, but to get that discipline into proper perspective. We do not come to know God through investigation, but by revelation.

Revelation does not depend on intellectual capacity, but on the disposition of heart. In His prayer, Jesus said, “You revealed them to little children. Yes, Father for this is what you were pleased to do” (Matthew 11:25-26).

The revelation of God is at the Son’s discretion for, “No one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him” (11:27). Jesus then says, “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls” (11:28-29). It is those people who are weary of carrying their own burdens, and come in humility to Jesus, placing their burdens on His shoulders, who find rest for their souls. To them, Jesus says, “Learn from me.”

Before the mind is ever thrilled with Jesus Christ, the disposition of the heart must be one of insufficiency in ourselves, which leads to full submission to Christ. The tests applied by God to people in Scripture were never tests of their intellectual grasp of truth, but of their disposition towards God, and the measure to which they depended on His sufficiency.

PRAYER: Thank You, Lord, that it is not how clever and learned we are, but our disposition of heart that allows us to come to know You.

TO REFLECT UPON: To what do I most credit my knowledge of God?