

Title: God's Secret Wisdom

Text: 1 Corinthians 2.14-16

Theme: Knowing it and Doing it

Series: 1 Corinthians #10

Prop Stmt. God calls believers to live out what the Spirit has placed into our hearts.

If you owned a yacht-building company, and 51 percent of the yachts that you were making were sinking as soon as you set them into the water, would you conclude that your machinery and workers just need to work faster or would you consider that perhaps you need to do something about the machinery or the workers or both?

If you were a math teacher and after a year of teaching half of your class still could not add or subtract, would you look a little closer at how you were teaching?

If you were the leader in a church, and fifty percent of the people in your church were in bondage to credit-cards, forty percent of your men and twenty percent of your women were regular viewers of internet porn, eighty percent of the children left the church after high school and never returned, 45 percent cheated on their income tax, and 75 percent said that their marriages were tolerable or worse, would you not be wondering if something was not fundamentally wrong and in need of change?

What if, within this same church, eighty percent of the people were able to write out a very clear explanation of justification by grace alone, through faith alone in Christ alone and most of these same people were able to tell you the purpose of the church, the strategy of the church, and the structure of the church, yet their own personal lives were marked by gambling, drug and alcohol abuse, fighting and violence. Would you not agree that somewhere along the line and somehow, people were failing to connect the dots. That is, people were failing to understand and live out the relationship between the message of the gospel and everyday life.

This morning, I am attempting to help you grasp a critical, an extremely critical component of Christianity.

Intro.

1) A Biblical view of wisdom – More Go, Less Show

A. OT

Do you remember how the various sections of the OT are identified?

Law –	Genesis –Deuteronomy
Historical Books –	Joshua – Esther
Wisdom/Poetical books –	Psalms – Song of Songs
Major Prophets -	Isaiah - Ezekiel
Minor Prophets	Daniel - Malachi

If I asked you to name the most practical book in the entire OT, what would you say? What one book is simply a collection of practical advice, pertinent instruction and proverbs for living? Proverbs! Proverbs is from the Wisdom section because Proverbs is all about wisdom. What is wisdom?

Knowledge + Application = Wisdom

We see this from: Proverbs 1.7 – “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline.” We also see this from Proverbs 9.10 “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.”

Exodus 31.3 – experienced skill (wise plumber – experienced plumber, mechanic), one who knows what to do.

The entire emphasis of this book is on acquiring and applying truth. What is the opposite of wisdom? Foolishness! The person who does not know is a fool and the person who knows and does not do is a fool as well. In fact, the person who knows and does not do is a greater fool. Is there anything in the NT that repeats this same emphasis? Absolutely!

No knowledge = folly

Knowledge – (minus) Application = folly, but a person who knows what to do, and does not do it, is rebellious, which is why in Proverbs rebellion is connected with foolishness.

B) NT primer on wisdom

What is the most practical book in the NT? Think with me, while the gospels have some application, their emphasis is more a theology of Christ. Acts is more historical. The Pauline epistles are certainly practical but they are also very theological. Revelation is more eschatological. What is the most practical book in the NT? Clearly it is James. What does the book of James deal with? Obviously wisdom is an important theme? Is James understanding of wisdom the same as the OT? Listen to these verses:

James 1.22 – “Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.” What is James saying?

Knowledge – (minus) Application = Deception

In James 3.13 he addresses it again. “Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show it by his good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom.”

Did Jesus address this subject at all? Do you remember the story of the two men who built homes and one built his house on a rock and the other on sand? What did Jesus say about that? “But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand.”

Knowledge – (minus) Application = Destruction

Therefore, biblical wisdom is one because of his or her genuine reverence for God, lives in such a way that he or she consistently demonstrates the ability to apply God's word in life's situations.

2) World's Wisdom – All Show, No Go

- A) Corinthian Wisdom - Secret Knowledge (no application required) = Wisdom
These people can talk a good game. They can say some really impressive things that sound deep, and mystical but when it comes to being able to handle life, it is obvious that they are in a mess.

Look at the church at Corinth. Their personal lives were in shambles and they were sitting in judgment on Paul. At Corinth, the world's idea of wisdom had deeply influenced the church's idea of wisdom. They thought that Paul was not "wise" because he did not measure up to the standards of the world.

- B) Contemporary Wisdom - Expert Knowledge (Application optional) = Wisdom

If you wrote a book, have a degree, host a talk show, conducted a study, you can be celebrated as an expert, even if your personal life does not measure up. We are more influenced by this thinking than we realize. Contemporary Christianity seems to be comfortable with the growing gap between the message that is proclaimed and the lives that we live. Does your life match the message of the gospel?

If I said, we have a great church because, we have a great children's program, great youth program, good speakers, enjoyable concerts, comfortable facilities, ministries for men and women, etc. Does that make us a great church? No. How are you living? Some of you are in financial bondage because you tried to buy a lifestyle that you could not afford. Some of you are in bondage to personal habits and live with a high level of guilt and frustration over the inconsistency that marks your life. Is this gospel that we preach and claim to believe making any difference at all in your life?

God's wisdom is not all show and no go. It is not designed to impress people with secret powers, and mysterious methods. Now, what does all of this have to do with the text that I read earlier and communion that we are going to observe? Absolutely everything!

When you come to faith in Christ, you have a new position in Christ. Already you are considered to be in Christ, but not yet are you living in complete harmony with that. How do I live in harmony with who I have become in Christ? The answer is: By intentionally cooperating with the Spirit of God. You cannot grow as a follower of Christ or build a ministry on the wisdom and the ways of the world. Why not? Because.... You will not find the Spirit of God in the World's Wisdom – v.14 -15

1. **The world does not understand God.** (14a)

The wisdom of the world is not designed with God at the center. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. The wisdom of the world is designed with man at the center. The fear of man is the beginning and end of the world's wisdom. Everything revolves around the individual. Therefore, the gospel seems irrational. It seems foolish. It seems offensive. The gospel says that you are a sinner who deserves the wrath of God. Try sharing that at the water cooler tomorrow when someone asks you what the preacher spoke about in church and see what sort of reaction you get. Why does the world not understand God, because the world does not have the Spirit of God who alone can reveal the mind of God.

I live in a world that has its own floating standard of what is right and wrong, acceptable and unacceptable. But, my world does not understand God, and without the fear of the Lord, my world cannot definitively provide me with the insight that I need to live my life, raise my children, solve relational problems or face difficulties. This world does not understand God because...

2. **The world cannot understand God.** (14b)

I know that this sounds like a repeat of what I said last Sunday because Paul is repeating this idea. I am saying it again, because the text is saying it again. It is very clear that God wanted to make certain that we really got this point through our skulls because we are so easily intimidated and influenced by the ideas and philosophies and theories of our world. I remind you. Only God can fully understand God. We, as the creation, cannot take the Creator and place all of Him under our microscope and figure Him out. He does not fit under our microscope. But, it is more than that. Without the Spirit of God (who knows the mind of God) working in us, we, on our own would never think like God. Without the Spirit, we think and react like the world. Even our religions are man-centered.

The world is very willing to accept a god that it can manipulate and use. It likes a god who is impressed with us and will reward our good behavior with gifts and favors. But, if we have to admit that we are rebels at heart and that because of our sin we are deserving of the wrath of God and that it is only by grace alone, through faith alone in Christ alone that we can be right with God, then, the world is not accepting of that. It sounds too narrow. The world assumes that religions are equal. It assumes that most people are basically good and they have noble intentions. The world does not fathom a God who had to live for us because of our rebellion and had to die for us because we are so helpless. Without the Spirit of God, a person is incapable of understanding God. That is why, salvation is truly by grace alone. We cannot even understand God and would not understand God, if He did not give us the Spirit to open our eyes. What makes a person spiritual? It is the Spirit! What is the giving of the Spirit? Regeneration. When God gives His Spirit to a person, that person can now see with his or her heart the desirableness and the logic of the gospel. The person without the Spirit cannot see that.

3. **The true Christian understands the world.** (15)

A genuine believer has had the Spirit of God open the eyes of his heart to the gospel. The believer (spiritual man – one who has the Spirit) makes judgments about all things. What does that mean? It means that even the world does not understand the believer, the believer understands the world. A genuine Christian understands evil, but a genuine Christian also understands what holiness is.

What does the wisdom of the world say? It says that Christianity is fine as long as it makes you feel good, but leave it out of the public arena. Keep it out of real life. The implication is that the Bible is simplistic and narrow it has some spiritual stuff in it that makes for good folklore around Christmas, but anyone who really believes this stuff is a danger to society. Since that is how the world thinks, do you see why it is not only naïve, but idiotic to crave the approval of our world, adopt its methods, and play for its applause? If we gain the approval of the world, then it is because we have lost our message.

4. **The True Christian understands the mind of Christ.** (16)

Quoting from Isaiah 40, Paul uses a double-edge point. The world cannot sit in judgment on God, but we have the capacity to understand God in a way that our world does not because we have the mind of Christ. The mind of Christ, that is the thinking and values of Christ are given to us by the Holy Spirit. The mind of Christ is what sets us so radically apart from our world.

If a group of people call themselves a church, but they do not understand the true gospel of Christ, and/or they do not live in a way that reflects the gospel, please understand it is not truly a church. Church is not going through the motions of a service, having leaders and doing the ordinances. Being a church means to engage with the truth at the heart level. Communion is a very important time for us, because it reminds us of who we are in Christ and calls us to take it seriously and live like it. If you claim to be a follower of Christ but you are not living like it, then before you take communion, you need to get your personal house in order and commit yourself to making some changes.

My car was dirty this week and everyday I considered washing it, seemed that rain was in the forecast. I went by a car wash on 13 mile road that was advertising Free Wash. I had seen it before, and thought, na – there's a catch. But, since it was the second time I had seen the offer, I thought I would check it out and found out that actually, the wash was free, but the upgrades cost a little bit. The message today has been pointed toward those who have become followers of Christ. But some of you are not clear on what exactly that means. I mentioned that salvation is by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. In one sense, salvation is free, only in this case, so are the upgrades (that is everything that comes with it). On the other hand, it cost Christ his life. What that means, and how that affects you is the most important issue that you could ever address. We are here to help you understand that. If that issue is not settled in your life, then you are not ready for communion yet.