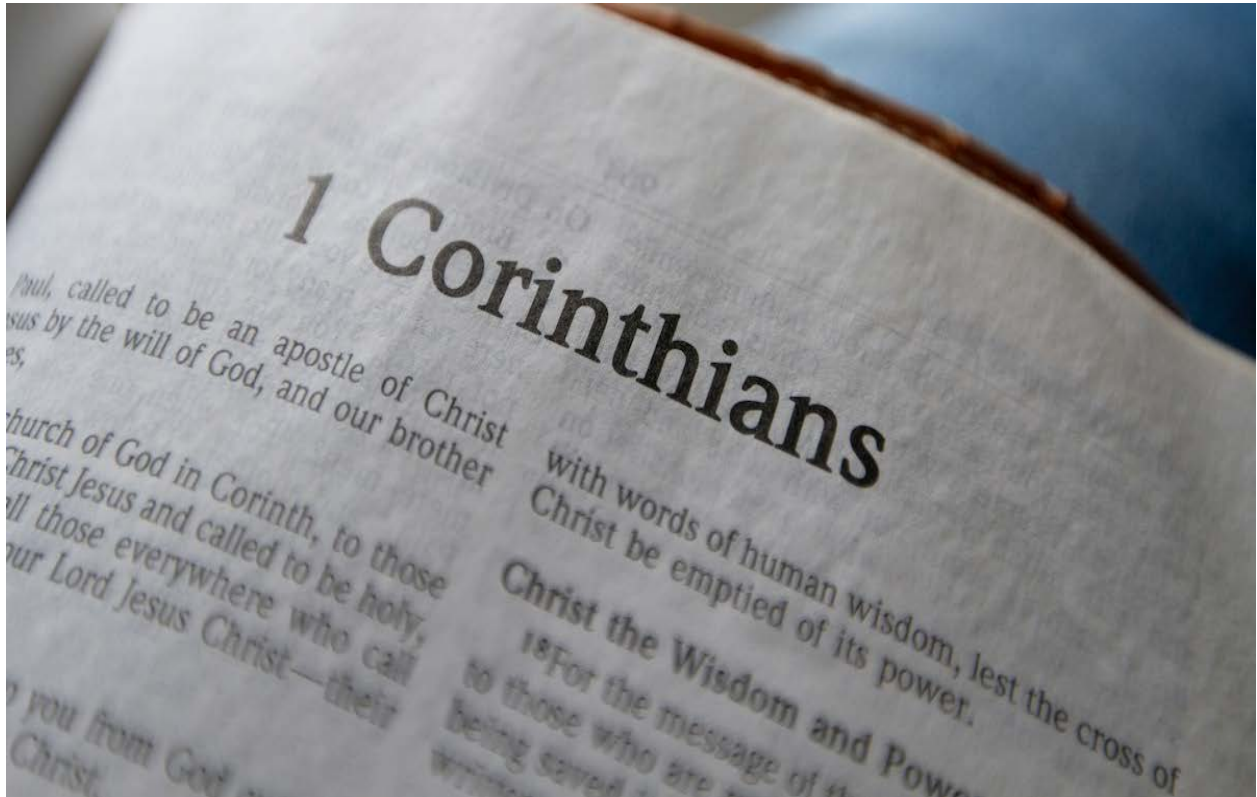


Right Minds

1 Corinthians 2

1 and 2 Corinthians Part 3



T. M. AND SUSIE MOORE

A Scriptorium Study from The Fellowship of Ailbe

Right Minds: 1 Corinthians 2
1 and 2 Corinthians Part 3
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Introduction to *1 Corinthians 2*

It's not that the church doesn't need gifted leaders, able theologians, or articulate preachers. We need all these. And we need every member of the church to embrace the gifts and calling God has appointed them, looking only to Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of our faith (Heb. 12.1-3) and relying on His Word and Spirit.

What we do not need is what the Corinthians had devolved into—Christian tribes beating their own drums, rallying around their own chiefs, and scorning those who did not measure up to their view of the faith. By turning away from the vision of Jesus, suffering and risen and exalted in glory, and by listening to the words of men rather than the Spirit of Christ, the churches had departed from God's plan and were in danger of becoming irrelevant—or worse.

But, to their credit, they knew something was not right, and they sent a team over to Ephesus to receive Paul's counsel so that they could get back in step with the Spirit.

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We hope you find this study instructive and helpful to equip you for your walk with and work for the Lord. Thank you for joining us.

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1 Whom to Know

Pray Psalm 132.13-18.

For the LORD has chosen Zion;
He has desired *it* for His dwelling place:
“This is My resting place forever;
Here I will dwell, for I have desired it.
I will abundantly bless her provision;
I will satisfy her poor with bread.
I will also clothe her priests with salvation,
And her saints shall shout aloud for joy.
There I will make the horn of David grow;
I will prepare a lamp for My Anointed.
His enemies I will clothe with shame,
But upon Himself His crown shall flourish.”

Sing Psalm 132.13-18.

(Finlandia: *Be Still, My Soul*)

God dwells among us, and He will forever, to meet our needs and clothe us with His grace.
He has to us sent Jesus Christ, our Savior—Beloved, eternal light and resting place.
His foes are banished from His Presence ever, but we shall reign with Him before His face.

Read and meditate on 1 Corinthians 2.1, 2.

Preparation

1. What did Paul not use in his ministry in Corinth?
2. What did he determine to know?

Meditation

Paul here invited the Corinthians to remember his own example when he was among them for a year and a half (v. 1). All his preaching and teaching was of Christ. Even though the unbelieving world mocked and scorned the idea that one so ignominiously put to death could be a person of any consequence, Paul preached Jesus, and especially the crucifixion.

For the crucifixion demonstrates the power of submission to God, humility and long-suffering, faith and love, seeking nothing of one’s own but only the welfare of God’s people and the glory of the Father. Jesus Christ, the crucified One, is the treasury of all wisdom and knowledge (Col. 2.2, 3). No sophisticated philosophizing, rhetorical oratory, exegetical expostulation, or scientific certitude can surpass or encompass the wisdom and knowledge of Jesus Christ. Paul kept all his ministry focused on Jesus, for he knew that only by seeing Jesus and clinging to Him could the believers in Corinth know true fellowship with God and one another. And only in Jesus would they acquire the knowledge and wisdom to be the Body of Christ in the world.

Submission to God, humility, long suffering, faith and love, seeking the good of others: This is what Jesus did, and this is how Paul lived and proclaimed Jesus among the Corinthians. But they did not sustain this focus and the strong ties of love and fellowship it engenders. They acted like children rather than mature believers (1 Cor. 3.1). The world was too much with them, and they rallied around “the wisdom of men” (v. 5) rather than Jesus and the wisdom and knowledge He embodies and proclaims.

Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162.

In 1 Corinthians 2.1 Paul speaks of the message that was not given with excellence of speech or of wisdom; it

was fully the testimony of God. The word testimony can also be translated mystery. And indeed, the love of God toward us is beyond understanding. “God thunders marvelously with His voice; He does great things which we cannot comprehend” (Job 37.5).

“Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen” (Eph. 3.20, 21).

A Child was born on Christmas Day
Born to save the world
But long before the world began
He knew His death was sure
The pain and strife secured

Mystery, how He came to be a Man
But greater still how His death was in His plan
God predestined that His Son would die
And He still created man
Oh, what love is this
That His death was in His hands

The Christmas trees
They glow so bright
With presents all around
But Christmas brought a tree of life
With blood that sacrificed
The greatest gift of life

I am just a man and
Can't begin to comprehend
When You look into this traitor's eyes
What do You see that justifies the Lamb

God predestined that His
Son would die
And He still created man
Oh, what love is this
That His death was in His plan
Mystery, mystery
Selah, "Mystery"

“Eye has not seen, nor ear heard,
nor have entered into the heart of man
the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.”
(1 Cor. 2.9; Is. 64.4; 65.17)

For reflection

1. Why is it so hard for us to keep our eyes on Jesus? To be eternally enthralled at the mystery of His incarnation, death, life, resurrection, ascension, and reign? What distracts us?
2. How would you counsel a new believer to keep seeking Jesus more and more each day? Why should they do that?

3. Today, what will you do to increase in the knowledge of Jesus and the mystery of His salvation?

In adding the word crucified, he does not mean that he preached nothing respecting Christ except the cross; but that, with all the abasement of the cross, he nevertheless preached Christ. It is as though he had said: "The ignominy of the cross will not prevent me from looking up to him from whom salvation comes, or make me ashamed to regard all my wisdom as comprehended in him — in him, I say, whom proud men despise and reject on account of the reproach of the cross." John Calvin (1509-1564), Commentary on 1 Corinthians 2.1, 2

Pray Psalm 132.8-12.

Use this time of prayer to strengthen your fellowship with Jesus. Call on Him to be present with you, in you, and through you. Plead with Him to increase in you and to bring more of His righteousness into your soul and life. Commit your day to Jesus, Who is with you always.

Sing Psalm 132.8-12.

(Finlandia: *Be Still, My Soul*)

Arise, O LORD, come to Your resting place; Your holy Presence meet with us in might.
Clothe us with righteousness in Jesus' grace, and we will shout to Your divine delight!
For David's sake, turn not away Your face, but look upon us in Your holy light.

Remember, LORD, the oath You swore to David; do not turn back, do not deny Your Word:
"One of your sons, with your throne I will favor, if he shall keep My cov'nant evermore,
and walk within My testimonies ever, thus he shall ever rule by Israel's LORD."

2 Where to Rest Your Faith

Pray Psalm 119.36, 37.

Incline my heart to Your testimonies,
And not to covetousness.
Turn away my eyes from looking at worthless things,
And revive me in Your way.

Sing Psalm 119.36, 37.

(Regent Square: *Angels from the Realms of Glory*)

To Your holy testimonies, turn my heart, O gracious LORD.
Let me covet nothing worthless; my delight is in Your Word.
O revive me! O revive me, in Your way, most holy LORD!

Read 1 Corinthians 2.1-5; meditate on verses 3-5.

Preparation

1. What did Paul not rely on in his speech and preaching?
2. Why did he trust in the Spirit and power of God?

Meditation

Paul continued pointing back to his own example when he was among the Corinthians. He certainly did not seek to vaunt himself or make his style, rhetoric, or erudition anything like a focus.

In his preaching and teaching, Paul did not rely on wordsmithery, but on the demonstration of the Spirit and power of God. I take this to mean that the Word of God was the primary content of his preaching and teaching. Perhaps this involved reading of long passages with brief comments and much cross-referencing and proof-texting. The Word, being from the Spirit, certainly demonstrates His power, for the Word is itself the power of God, the wellspring of life, and the key to knowing Jesus (Heb. 4.12; Jn. 6.63; Jn. 5.39).

That Paul depended primarily on the Scriptures is clear from other places in Acts (Acts 20.21, 28.23) as well as from his epistles. He did not ignore matters of grammar and style, but he did not rely on these to persuade his hearers. He let the Word and Spirit do their convicting, converting, transforming, and edifying work (see on, vv. 10-13).

It was on Jesus and His Word that Paul sought to have the Corinthians' faith come to rest. Had they done so, the schism they were experiencing, and all the problems that came with division, might not have come to pass. Only the Word has power to sanctify and make us one in Jesus (Jn. 17.17, 21). The more we cling to the Word and take it into our soul, the better we will know Jesus, and will prefer knowing, loving, and serving Him to all else.

Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

Paul is a study in how to deflect attention from oneself and onto the Lord.

He wrote to the Corinthians, sharing that when he was with them, he suffered from human weakness, fear, and with much trembling. He also said that his speech and preaching were not with persuasive words or full of human wisdom. "*But in demonstration of the Spirit and of His power*" (1 Cor. 2.3, 4). He also made mention of the reason for this: that their faith should not be put in him, or any of the other preachers and teachers, "*but in the power of God*" (1 Cor. 2.5). *But in*. Paul didn't trust in himself, nor did he want them to trust in him, *but only in the power of God and His Spirit*.

“God has spoken once, twice I have heard this:

That power belongs to God” (Ps. 62.11).

“Not by [your] might nor by [your] power,
but by My Spirit,’ says the LORD of hosts” (Zech. 4.6).

“...strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power...” (Col. 1.11).

“But we have this treasure in earthen vessels,
that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us” (2 Cor. 4.7).

We are called and chosen to go into our Personal Mission Field with this same *But In* mentality.

We dare not try anything on our own. We should take to heart the commercials that advise: “Do not try this at home; or this was done by a professional driver; or actor portrayal, not a real doctor.”

Since we know that we must seek the Holy Spirit’s power to live each moment of our day in the likeness of Jesus Christ, we will most gladly seek Him in His Word and talk to Him in prayer. Without Him we can do nothing (Jn. 15.5).

“For our gospel did not come to you in word only,
but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance,
as you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake” (1 Thess. 1.5).

*My faith has found a resting place, Not in device nor creed;
I trust the Ever-living One, His wounds for me shall plead.*

*My heart is leaning on the Word, The written Word of God,
Salvation by my Savior’s Name, Salvation through His blood.*

*I need no other argument, I need no other plea,
It is enough that Jesus died, and that He died for me.*
(Lidie H. Edmunds, 19th century)

Indeed, that is where we rest our faith—not in ourselves, *but in* Him alone.

For reflection

1. How do you know that you are resting your faith entirely on Jesus alone?
2. What would signal you that you were beginning to lose that focus?
3. Whom will you encourage today to rest their faith entirely in Jesus and Jesus alone?

When nothing but Christ crucified is plainly preached, the success must be entirely from Divine power accompanying the word, and thus men are brought to believe, to the salvation of their souls. Matthew Henry (1562-1714), *Commentary on 1 Corinthians 2.1-5*

Pray Psalm 119.38-40.

Pray that God will establish you in His Word. Ask Him to create in you a greater longing for all His Word, and especially that you might know Jesus there.

Sing Psalm 119.38-40 .

(Regent Square: *Angels from the Realms of Glory*)

Set me firmly in Your statutes, for Your servant, LORD, am I.

Right Minds: 1 Corinthians 2

Fearing You in sweet devotion, let me live until I die.
Let no dread, let no reproach obscure Your judgments from my eye.

For Your holy precepts, Jesus, my whole heart longs earnestly,
for Your judgments all are good; Your Word is a delight to me!
In Your righteousness revive me! For Your goodness I would see!

3 The Wisdom of God

Pray Psalm 111.9, 10.

He has sent redemption to His people;
He has commanded His covenant forever:
Holy and awesome is His name.
The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom;
A good understanding have all those who do His commandments.
His praise endures forever.

Sing Psalm 111.9, 10.

(Manoah: *When All Your Mercies, O My God*)

You have sent redemption, to us, LORD, in Christ of cov'nant fame,
and we in wonder, grace, and awe adore Your holy Name.

All they who would true wisdom know must learn to fear You, LORD,
and in that wisdom daily live and praise You evermore.

Read 1 Corinthians 2.1-8; meditate on verses 6-8.

Preparation

1. To whom did Paul speak God's wisdom?
2. In what form did he speak the wisdom of God?

Meditation

The Corinthians, we recall, were playing the “world’s game” of wisdom, looking to this or that teacher as the brightest and the best, then vaunting him—and themselves as his followers—above all others. They were resting their faith “in the wisdom of men” rather than “in the power of God” (v. 5).

In verse 6 Paul implies that the Corinthians thus demonstrated that they were not ready for the wisdom of God, which only comes by way of divine revelation (“mystery”). From long ago, before time began, God ordained to reveal His wisdom (v. 7). Those who satisfy themselves with man’s wisdom, playing the worldly game, cannot receive the true wisdom of God. Indeed, they “are coming to nothing” (Paul’s looking at you, Corinthians).

There is real wisdom which is hidden in “the Lord of glory”, Who is the treasure of all wisdom and knowledge. The rulers and wise guys of this age know nothing about that wisdom, which they demonstrated by crucifying Jesus and continue to demonstrate by ignoring or scorning Him. But—and here Paul is telling it slant—weren’t the Corinthians doing the same thing? Had they not set aside the pure knowledge and wisdom of Jesus, and Him crucified, to rally around the rhetorical or intellectual or whatever gifts of men, even good men? Had they not lowered Jesus to the status of a man like the men others vaunted? But don’t blame the men—Apollon, Cephas, and Paul. As Paul reminded the Corinthians, he gave them nothing to boast about in himself, weak and fearful and trembling and unpersuasive when he was among them (vv 3, 4).

Paul was eager to speak the true wisdom of God in response to the matters the Corinthians had raised. But they would not be able to receive it unless they renewed their focus on Jesus and realized Paul was speaking as His voice, and not like one who has merely “human wisdom” (v. 4) to offer. The Corinthians had questions for Paul and issues they hoped he would resolve. But if he was to do so, they would have to grow up, starting by refocusing all their faith on Jesus, not men. Otherwise, the wisdom God has for them would go right over their heads.

Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

Who are the people of this age that we listen to—the rulers or stars or preachers or politicians—who will come to nothing? Those who catch our fancy by their seeming “wisdom”? Why are they fascinating? How will they help us in the end? What are they saying that does not line up with Scripture?

The Word of God is the only entity that never changes, its wisdom is enduring. It does not blow with the winds of time, its truths are the same yesterday, today, and forever (Heb. 13.8) You can base your life now, and your future eternally, on the truth of Jesus Christ. Nothing else is secure. All else will fail us in the end.

As Paul wrote of this truth, none of the rulers of this age know it, for “had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory” (1 Cor. 2.8); nor would they ignore Him now.

The Wisdom of God, this very Son of God, has ever been, and ever will be (Jn. 1.1-4):

“The LORD possessed Me at the beginning of His way,
Before His works of old.
I have been established from everlasting,
From the beginning, before there was ever an earth.
When there were no depths I was brought forth,
When there were no fountains abounding with water.
Before the mountains were settled, before the hills,
I was brought forth; while as yet
He had not made the earth or the fields,
Or the primal dust of the world.
When He prepared the heavens, I was there,
When He drew a circle on the face of the deep,
When He established the clouds above,
When He strengthened the fountains of the deep,
When He assigned to the sea its limit,
So that the waters would not transgress His command,
When He marked out the foundations of the earth,
Then I was beside Him as a master craftsman;
And I was daily His delight,
Rejoicing always before Him,
Rejoicing in His inhabited world,
And My delight was with the sons of men” (Prov. 8.22-31).

Do we truly know Him? In His Word? In His creation?
Do we understand the mystery and hidden wisdom of God?
This Wisdom of God ordained before the ages?

Jesus. He is everywhere to be known in His Word.
And God has prepared the gift of Him,
To be known by those who love Him (1 Cor. 2.7; Rom. 5.8, 9).

It is an unveiled mystery solved, graciously for us, by God.
We need only read to the end to find and understand it (Jn. 5.39; 17.3).

For reflection

1. Why is Jesus referred to as the “Wisdom of God”?
2. How does focusing on Jesus, rather than men and their teachings, keep us from falling into division and

disunity?

3. Whom will you talk to today about this magnificent Wisdom of God?

The wisdom of God is hidden because it is not in words but in power. It is impossible in human terms, but it can be believed by the power of the Spirit. Ambrosiaster (fl. 66-384), *Commentary on Paul's Epistles*

Pray Psalm 111.1-4.

Praise God for His many works and for the many ways He works to make you more like Jesus. Remember in prayer that He made and saved you, and that He keeps and sanctifies you. Give Him glad praise and thanks.

Sing Psalm 111.1-4.

(Manoah: *When All Your Mercies, O My God*)

Praise the LORD! O let my heart give thanks here amid His chosen race!
Your works are great, O LORD, and sought by all who know Your grace.

For Your work is full of splendor, LORD, and of majesty most pure;
Your righteousness, O glorious God, forever will endure!

You have caused Your many wondrous works to remain before our face.
For You are full of mercy, LORD, and abounding all in grace.

4 God-Blockers

Pray Psalm 71.1-3.

In You, O LORD, I put my trust;
Let me never be put to shame.
Deliver me in Your righteousness, and cause me to escape;
Incline Your ear to me, and save me.
Be my strong refuge,
To which I may resort continually;
You have given the commandment to save me,
For You *are* my rock and my fortress.

Sing Psalm 71.1-3.

(Solid Rock: *My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less*)

In You, O LORD, I refuge claim; O let me never be ashamed.
In righteousness deliver me; incline Your ear and hear my plea.

Refrain v. 3

A Rock of habitation be; command Your Word to rescue me;
my Rock and Fortress ever be!

Read 1 Corinthians 2.1-12; meditate on verses 9-12.

Preparation

1. What have we received?
2. Why have we received this?

Meditation

Wonders, glories, mysteries, holy pleasures, profound insights, deep understanding, real and increasing fellowship with God, insights to true beauty, power for righteousness, and peace and joy indescribable—all this has been prepared for us by God our Father, is granted to us through Jesus Christ our Lord, and comes to be our possession and experience through the indwelling Spirit of God (vv. 9, 10).

The one condition for knowing such things is that we love Him above all else.

The Corinthians were not experiencing this (as we shall see) because rather than look to Jesus and submit to His Spirit, speaking in His Word, they were busy fashioning their lives around the wisdom of men. “I am of Paul!” “I am of Apollos!” “I am of Cephas!” Great as these men were, to make them the focal point of their faith was to set obstacles in the path of knowing God and Christ. The Corinthians were loving themselves in the guise of professing loyalty to one or another man. No wonder the churches were divided. God-blockers—Paulism, Apolloism, Peterism—were diverting their focus from Jesus, so that they could not see Him, and Him crucified, and thus were unable to access the “things which God has prepared for those who love Him” (v. 9).

Had they, indeed, received the Spirit of God (v. 12)? Paul wanted them to consider the question, since they seemed uninterested in knowing “the things that have been freely given to us by God” and were busy studying and celebrating the spirit of mere men (v. 11)—in the Name of the Lord, of course. They who have the Spirit will be prompt and diligent in His school, for great and transforming mysteries await our attention.

Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

Are you content to accept this as a truth about yourself?

“Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man

the things which God has prepared for those who love Him”? (1 Cor. 2.9).

I think we all would prefer to fully see, hear, and have God’s Word penetrate the deepest part of our heart regarding the things He has prepared for us who love Him. The only catch is: we need to love Him and be filled with His Spirit. As Paul wrote, when we receive the Spirit of God into our hearts, it is then, and only then, that “we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God” (1 Cor. 2.12).

“For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, ‘Abba, Father’” (Rom. 8.15).

The [Crosfigell column](#) for today is about the Irish saint Colum Cille, a man full of God’s Spirit. His life reflects the salient features of Paul’s words of instruction to us “Colum was filled with Jesus because he emptied himself of Colum. Filled with Jesus, guided by His Word, and empowered by His Spirit, Colum spread the grace of God wherever he went, such that many were saved, many others were healed, and much evil was driven out wherever he went to serve. Colum’s word to us is Paul’s to the Corinthians: ‘Therefore, we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal’ (2 Cor. 4.16-18).”

When we are living, full of the Holy Spirit, like Colum did, and Paul; when we empty ourselves of ourselves so that we can be filled up with the Spirit of God, we are then able to understand the truths of Scripture, equipped to understand God’s own heart.

“The works of the LORD are great, studied by all who have pleasure in them...

“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; a good understanding have all those who do His commandments. His praise endures forever” (Ps. 111.2, 10).

Through His Word and Spirit we will see and hear Him and begin to understand all the glorious things that He has prepared for us...including the works He has “prepared beforehand that we should walk in them” (Eph. 2.10) for the good of others, to “spread the grace of God” as we are going in our Personal Mission Field.

For reflection

1. What does it mean for you to empty yourself?
2. What should you expect when you are filled with the Spirit and walking with Him?
3. Whom will you encourage today to be filled with the Spirit in working their Personal Mission Field?

The apostles were not guided by worldly principles. They had the revelation of these things from the Spirit of God, and the saving impression of them from the same Spirit. These things they declared in plain, simple language, taught by the Holy Spirit, totally different from the affected oratory or enticing words of man’s wisdom. The natural man, the wise man of the world, receives not the things of the Spirit of God. The pride of carnal reasoning is really as much opposed to spirituality, as the basest sensuality.
Matthew Henry (1662-1714), *Commentary on 1 Corinthians 2.10--16*

Pray Psalm 71.14-18.

Ask God to fill you with His Spirit, that His Spirit might teach you the things of Christ and empower you to live and speak for Him today.

Sing Psalm 71.14-18.

(Solid Rock: *My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less*)

Right Minds: 1 Corinthians 2

But as for me my voice I raise to sing in hope and constant praise!
With saving grace my voice will swell Your never-ending grace to tell.

Refrain v. 3

A Rock of habitation be; command Your Word to rescue me;
my Rock and Fortress ever be!

O LORD, I praise Your righteousness Who me from youth have taught and blessed.
Forsake me not when I am old, 'til I Your mercies all have told!

Refrain

5 Two Mirrors

Pray Psalm 119.129-131.

Your testimonies are wonderful;
Therefore my soul keeps them.
The entrance of Your words gives light;
It gives understanding to the simple.
I opened my mouth and panted,
For I longed for Your commandments.

Sing Psalm 119.129-131.

(No Other Plea: *My Faith Has Found a Resting Place*)

Your testimonies, LORD are sweet; I hide them in my soul.
Your words give light unto my feet, and make my thinking whole.
I open wide my mouth to You: LORD, feed me with Your Word!
I vow that all You say I'll do: I love Your precepts, LORD.

Read 1 Corinthians 2.1-15; meditate on verses 13-15.

Preparation

1. How does the “natural man” regard the things of God? Why?
2. How does the Spirit teach those who believe?

Meditation

Paul continued holding up two mirrors to the Corinthians—one of the “natural” world and one of the world of God’s Spirit. He was leading them to look into each one, side-by-side. His purpose was that they might see which of those mirrors best reflected their status.

So far, because of the divisions they allowed to fracture their fellowship, and their prideful trust in men, the Corinthians were looking more like the sinful world than the new world which Jesus is bringing into being.

Man’s wisdom counts for nothing in learning the things God freely gives us in His Word (v. 14). We need the Holy Spirit to teach us, but we must show up for class daily. And when you show up, don’t be looking instead at some views of this or that teacher, preacher, or saint, which you have tucked between the pages of your Bible. Only the Word of God has the “spiritual things” we need to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (v. 13).

The Spirit’s teaching method is to draw on spiritual things found throughout the Bible (v. 13), combining light and truth from here and there to reveal Jesus and lead us into God’s will. The more consistently we read and study God’s Word, and the more of it we store up in our soul, the more the Spirit will have readily available to lead us into the glory and truth of God, and we’ll be better prepared to discern truth and judge between right and wrong (v. 15).

As the Spirit does this, we look in the mirror where Jesus shines through, and we find—to our great delight—that we’re looking more like Him every day (2 Cor. 3.12-18).

Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

The best gift ever is salvation. It is undeserved grace upon grace poured upon us through the mercy of God, the sacrifice of His dear Son Jesus, and the ever-present guarantee of the Holy Spirit. Nothing surpasses that!

But after that, the next best gift is the Word of God: “living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged

sword” that pierces even to divide “soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account” (Heb. 4.12, 13). This Word of God was “given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Tim. 3.16, 17).

This is the same Word of God that we are commanded to study, and through which we are to be “diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Tim. 2.15).

There is no other way to come to the knowledge of God. None.

Now I am sure if one was imprisoned for their faith, and all Bibles were inaccessible to them, that the Holy Spirit would bring to mind the truths and promises of Scripture (Jn. 16.13, 14). But those truths and promises must have at some time become dear to one’s heart, read, meditated on, prayed through, and cherished for it to be accessible to their minds and memory (Ps. 119.11, 15, 18, 27, etc., etc.).

I cannot do what Emily Dickinson does so well, and that is tell it slant, in her poetry.

I can only say this as clearly and carefully as is possible: Read the Word of God. Study it, meditate on it, pray it into your soul, cherish it, love it, adore it, memorize it, compare it to itself, and read it some more. It is The Treasure Chest of God: full of precious gifts to be honored and pondered.

“Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path” (Ps. 119.105).

“But His Word was in my heart like a burning fire...” (Jer. 20.9).

“Your Words were found, and I ate them, and Your Word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart; for I am called by Your name, O LORD God of hosts” (Jer. 15.16).

“I have treasured the Words of His mouth more than my necessary food” (Job 23.12).

We, of all people, are most blessed.

God has chosen to save us; and He has given us His Word to enlighten and sanctify us.

We only need to accept these Treasures and use them for His glory.

Daily working and worshiping in His Word.

For reflection

1. The more you read and study the Bible, the more you give the Spirit room to work in shaping you into the image of Jesus. Why is this so?
2. The Spirit of God longs to teach us the Word of God. How can you improve your time with Him, listening as He teaches you the things of Jesus?
3. How does reading and studying the Word, listening as the Spirit teaches, keep us from promoting divisions in the church?

This is the sum and substance of the gospel. Christ crucified is the foundation of all our hopes, the fountain of all our joys. And by his death we live. Matthew Henry (1662-1714), Commentary on 1 Corinthians 1.17-25

Pray Psalm 119.132-136.

Pray that God will increase your overall grasp of the Scriptures, so that the Spirit has plenty of “spiritual things” to work with in teaching You His Word and drawing you closer to Jesus.

Sing Psalm 119.132-136.

(No Other Plea: *My Faith Has Found a Resting Place*)

Look on me, LORD, with mercy as on all who love Your Name.
Direct my steps to keep Your paths, and all Your Word proclaim.
Yes, let Your Word my shelter be; rule over all my soul,
and keep me from iniquity; my every way control.

Redeem me from oppression, LORD, from those who hate Your way,
that I may keep Your holy Word and serve You day by day.
Shine on me with Your glorious face; Your servant, LORD, am I.
So teach me by Your holy grace; Your Word to me supply.

LORD, see the world in lawlessness, how love has grown so cold.
Look down, O LORD, to save and bless; let grace and peace take hold.
Though many look on You with awe, rejoicing in Your Word,
I weep for those who void Your Law and spurn Your grace, O LORD.

6 The Mind of Christ

Pray Psalm 40.4, 5.

Blessed is that man who makes the LORD his trust,
And does not respect the proud, nor such as turn aside to lies.
Many, O LORD my God, *are* Your wonderful works
Which You have done;
And Your thoughts toward us
Cannot be recounted to You in order;
If I would declare and speak *of them*,
They are more than can be numbered.

Sing Psalm 40.4, 5.

(Dix: *For the Beauty of the Earth*)

Blessed are all who trust in You, turning both from lies and pride.
Countless wonders, LORD, You do, and Your thoughts with us abide.
LORD, Your worth who can declare? None with You can e'er compare.

Read 1 Corinthians 2.1-16; meditate on verse 16.

Prepare

1. What question does Paul ask the Corinthians?
2. What do we have, according to Paul?

Meditation

In chapter 3 Paul will stop speaking “slant” to the Corinthians and will get right in their faces about their problems and need. Here, he’s still leading them to reflect on their divided state compared with what God has done and intended for them, and to consider the implications of their condition.

It was never the intention of Jesus’ mind that His Church should be anything other than one Body in Him (Jn.17.11, 20-23). Or that a competition of “who’s the greatest” should be engaged among His followers (Mk. 10.41-45). Or that His people should look to anyone more than Him to carry out their calling in His Kingdom (Jn. 14.6).

The Corinthians, because they were vaunting men and dividing the Body of Christ, were saying, in effect, that they knew better than God how all this was supposed to work. But does anyone dare to instruct God? Isn’t it the height of hubris to know what God requires and to set that aside for what we prefer?

Paul insisted that they stop thinking like natural men and start thinking with the mind of Christ. If they would look at their divided condition as Jesus does, they would be ashamed and startled, perhaps enough to find their way back to a unified focus on Jesus Christ, and Him crucified and exalted. “Stop thinking like mere men!” Paul says. “You have the mind of Christ; use it!”

Precious and sound advice for churches in every age.

Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162.

“Have you not known?
Have you not heard?
Has it not been told you from the beginning?
Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth?”

It is He who sits above the circle of the earth...”

“To whom then will you liken Me,
Or to whom shall I be equal?
says the Holy One.
Lift up your eyes on high, and see
Who has created these things, (Gen. 1.1)
Who brings out their host by number;
He calls them all by name, (Ps. 19.1)
By the greatness of His might and the strength of His power;
Not one is missing” (Is. 40.21, 22,25, 26).

We have been given the “mind of Christ” (1 Cor. 2.16) not to instruct Him—truly how could we?—but to learn of Him, with the intention of being like Him.

“Therefore, since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh for the lusts of men, but for the will of God” (1 Pet. 4.1, 2). Possible only through the power of the Holy Spirit.

“Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross” (Phil. 2.5-8). Possible only through saturating our minds and hearts with His Word and power.

Any time we find ourselves straying from the way, truth, and life (Jn. 14.6) of Scripture, we are not thinking with the mind of Christ.

Are we breaking any of the Law of God? Are we worshiping in our own fashion and not in the way prescribed by God? Are we surreptitiously avoiding the Word of God? Yep, that’s a pretty sure sign that we have crept back into our hearts and begun to squeeze out the space previously occupied by the Holy Spirit.

And that is no way to live. Not if we long to have the mind of Christ, to become more like Him daily.

For reflection

1. What does it mean to you to have the mind of Christ?
2. How do you use the mind of Christ each day? What can you do to improve in this?
3. What would be the opposite of the mind of Christ? How can we know when we’re drifting into that?

In the Holy Scriptures, the mind of Christ, and the mind of God in Christ, are fully made known to us. It is the great privilege of Christians, that they have the mind of Christ revealed to them by his Spirit. Matthew Henry (1662-1714), *Commentary on 1 Corinthians 2.10-16*

Pray Psalm 40.1-3, 6-10.

Thank God that He has saved, adopted, and called you to His Kingdom and glory! Preview your day in prayer, and commit to delighting in God and His Word in all you do.

Sing Psalm 40.1-3, 6-10.

(Dix: *For the Beauty of the Earth*)

I waited patiently for God; He inclined and heard my cry,

Right Minds: 1 Corinthians 2

lifted me up above the sod, set me on a Rock on high!
New songs in my mouth He gave; may He through me many save.

Off'rings You do not require – open now my ears, O LORD!
What from me do You desire? Firm delight to do Your Word.
Take my life in ev'ry part; write Your Law upon my heart.

LORD, Your truth will I proclaim to Your people gathered 'round,
nor will I my lips restrain – let Your precious ways resound!
Of Your saving grace and Word I would speak, most loving LORD.

7 Not That, This!

Pray Psalm 147.19, 20.

He declares His word to Jacob,
His statutes and His judgments to Israel.
He has not dealt thus with any nation;
And *as for His* judgments, they have not known them.
Praise the LORD!

Sing Psalm 147.19, 20.

(St. Anne: *Our God, Our Help in Ages Past*)

His Word He to His Church bestows—His promises and Law.
No other nation God thus knows: Praise Him with songs of awe!

Review 1 Corinthians 2.1-16; meditate on verses 10-12.

Preparation

1. What does the Spirit do?
2. Why has He been given to us?

Meditation

It's not that the church doesn't need gifted leaders, able theologians, or articulate preachers. We need all these. And we need every member of the church to embrace the gifts and calling God has appointed them, looking only to Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of our faith (Heb. 12.1-3) and relying on His Word and Spirit.

What we do not need is what the Corinthians had devolved into—Christian tribes beating their own drums, rallying around their own chiefs, and scorning those who did not measure up to their view of the faith. By turning away from the vision of Jesus, suffering and risen and exalted in glory, and by listening to the words of men rather than the Spirit of Christ, the churches had departed from God's plan and were in danger of becoming irrelevant—or worse.

But, to their credit, they knew something was not right, and they sent a team over to Ephesus to receive Paul's counsel so that they could get back in step with the Spirit.

The Spirit teaches us through the Word so that we might understand the wonders and promises God has in store for us (v. 10). Those who are merely "natural" men will not listen to the Spirit. They prefer the words of mere men. But the words of mere men cannot assure us that the words we're hearing are the Word of God. For that we need the Spirit and the Word God has revealed to us through Him (vv. 11, 12).

In 1 Corinthians 2 Paul deftly winds up his exposé of the Corinthians' schismatic behavior by offering a series of comparisons: his example, their practice; the natural person, the spiritual person; the one who is taught by God's Spirit and the one who is not. It's as if he is saying to them, "Not that, this!" Not tribalism but unity. Not playing the world's game, but living God's way. Not in the spirit of mere men, but in the Spirit of God.

Not that, this. It's good counsel for own walk with and work for the Lord.

Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

"The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law" (Deut. 29.29).

"But God has revealed them" (1 Cor. 2.10).

What is it that God has revealed?

“The things which God has prepared for those who love Him” (1 Cor. 2.9).

What things are these? And why are they a secret?

Well, they just seem like a secret because only those who love God can know them.

And what we know is His amazing love, grace, mercy, and forgiveness.

And through this amazing love we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit to help us unpack the hidden treasures found in His Word and works.

This is the same Holy Spirit Who has been from eternity:

“The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep.

And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters” (Gen. 1.2).

This is the same Jesus Who has been from eternity:

“Who has ascended into heaven, or descended?

Who has gathered the wind in His fists?

Who has bound the waters in a garment?

Who has established all the ends of the earth?

What is His name, and what is His Son’s name,

if you know?” (Prov. 30.4).

Not everyone believes these truths. But you do, because God has revealed them to you through His Spirit.

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (Gen. 1.1).

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God” (Jn. 1.1, 2).

Not everyone believes these truths. But you do, because God has revealed them to you through His Holy Spirit.

“No one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God” (1 Cor. 2.11) and you.

Not everyone believes these truths. But you do, because God has revealed them to you through His Spirit.

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life” (Jn. 3.16).

“But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom. 5.8).

Not everyone believes these truths. But you do, because God has revealed them to you through His Spirit.

“Set your hearts on all the words which I testify among you today, which you shall command your children to be careful to observe—all the words of this law.” Reading the Word of God and keeping the Law of God is “not a futile thing for you, because it is your life, and by this word you shall prolong your days...” (Deut. 32.46, 47).

“If you love Me, keep My commandments” (Jn. 14.15).

“You are My friends if you do whatever I command you” (Jn. 15.14).

“For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also” (Jms. 2.26).

These secret things have been revealed to us “that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God” (1 Cor. 2.12). “This!”

For reflection

1. God reveals His secrets to us who believe in Him. Why would He do this? How should we respond?
2. What do these secret things enable us to know and do?

3. What can you do to encourage your fellow believers to seek more of the secret things God wants to reveal to us?

No one can know the things of God, but his Holy Spirit, who is one with the Father and the Son, and who makes known Divine mysteries to his church. This is most clear testimony, both to the real Godhead and the distinct person of the Holy Spirit.
Matthew Henry (1662-1714), *Commentary on 1 Corinthians 2.10-16*

Pray Psalm 147.1-7.

Give thanks to God for His many excellent gifts. Praise Him for His many virtues. Call on Him to build His Church into one unified Body of believers in Jesus, humbly serving one another and the world in His Name.

Sing Psalm 147.1-7.

(St. Anne: *Our God, Our Help in Ages Past*)

Praise God, for it is good to sing loud praises to the LORD!
With joy our songs of praise we bring to God and to His Word.

The LORD builds up His Church and He His people gathers in.
The broken hearts He tenderly repairs and heals their sin.

He counts the stars, He knows the name of every chosen soul;
His pow'r is great, and great His fame Who understands us whole.

The humble God exalts above; the wicked He casts down.
Sing thanks to this great God of love; let songs of praise abound.

Right Minds: 1 Corinthians 2

Questions for Reflection or Discussion

1. What about his own example did Paul want the Corinthians to recall? Why was that important?
2. In what ways were the Corinthians acting more like “natural men” than those who possessed the Spirit of God?
3. What does the Spirit do for those who receive Him? How does He do this?
4. What does it mean to have the mind of Christ? How should that help us in thinking about following Him?
5. What’s the most important lesson you’ve learned from this part of our study of 1 and 2 Corinthians?

For prayer:

The Fellowship of Ailbe

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