

Christians Gone Wild!
1st Corinthians, week 5
Wise Like Jesus (1 Corinthians 2:1–16)
Pastor Mark Driscoll

“For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.”

1 Corinthians 2:2

¹ When I came to you, brothers, I did not come with eloquence or superior wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. ² For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. ³ I came to you in weakness and fear, and with much trembling. ⁴ My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, ⁵ so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power. 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. 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. ⁸ None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. 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"— ¹⁰ but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. 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. 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. 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. 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. ¹⁵ The spiritual man makes judgments about all things, but he himself is not subject to any man's judgment: ¹⁶ "For who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ.

Early in the book of First Corinthians, Paul seeks to define for his people both what it means to be spiritual in God's eyes and the means by which God makes someone spiritual. This was important because the Corinthians had a wrong notion of spirituality and how one becomes spiritual. Paul corrects this by explaining spiritual preaching, which imparts spiritual wisdom in spiritual words for the growth of spiritual people.

Spiritual Preachers (1 Corinthians 2:1–5)

The truly spiritual preacher may not be calm or rock-star cool. Paul clearly entered the pulpit with some anxiety and, according to history, was likely a short bald man with a unibrow, a crooked nose, and crooked legs.

However, the spiritual preacher speaks with God's authority to bring God's Word to people so that they might know Jesus and live in obedience to Him. For this to occur, the preacher must simply preach with courage in a plain and

straightforward way that enables even the simplest of hearers to understand. The content of every sermon preached must be the cross, where Jesus Christ died to forgive sins and reconcile sinners to their holy God, so that no aspect of life is disconnected from Jesus' person and work on the cross. Thus, the preacher must spend considerable time with God, meditating on God's Word and repenting of his own sin. He must allow the Holy Spirit to empower him to preach in such a way that lives are changed by the power of the Spirit through the preaching of God's Word. Anything else is not spiritual preaching, and any man who fails in these duties may be hip and calm in the pulpit but should fear the day he stands before God to give an account for his ministry.

Spiritual Wisdom (1 Corinthians 2:6–10a)

Spiritual preachers should only teach wisdom that comes from God through the revelation of Scripture by the Holy Spirit. This means that the pulpit should in no way echo the vanity and folly of the lost and dying world. Rather, spiritual wisdom is eternal truth fit for all people, times, and places. It is not to be found in esoteric experiences or human insights, but rather in the only God, Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory. Consequently, anything pretending to be spiritual or wise that does not exalt Jesus Christ as the Lord who rules over all of history, all of culture, and all of life is simply folly that is not from the Holy Spirit or fit for God's people.

Spiritual Words (1 Corinthians 2:10b–13)

Spiritual preachers proclaim spiritual wisdom in words that must be explained for God's people to understand their meaning. Truth does not come from the speculation of lost people, but solely from the revelation of the Holy Spirit. This is because no human being has access to the mind of God, but God the Spirit reveals to us truth about God that would otherwise be impossible for us to know.

Spiritual People (1 Corinthians 2:14–16)

The result of spiritual preachers proclaiming wisdom in spiritual words is that God the Holy Spirit makes people Christians, and makes Christians mature. Only through the Holy Spirit opening a person's understanding does any spiritual truth about Jesus not sound like foolish nonsense. Apart from the Holy Spirit, people are naturally blind, deaf, and dead to God, utterly incapable of interpreting and accepting the truth that is revealed to them. This wonderful ability to understand truths about Jesus and be a spiritual person like Jesus is not for an elite group of Christians; rather, it is for all Christians because they are indwelt and led by the same Spirit. God the Holy Spirit illuminates Scripture's meaning so that spiritual people can have spiritual wisdom. This explains why Paul then closes this section by quoting Isaiah 40:13. For the truly spiritual person filled with the Holy Spirit, the final authority in their life on truth and error, wisdom and folly is always God's wise Word about Jesus.