

INTRODUCTION

We're going to learn in tonight's scripture that wisdom has absolutely nothing to do with intelligence. Wisdom is something totally different.

Perhaps you heard that a few years ago, Billy Sims, who used to play for the Oklahoma Sooners and was a Heisman Trophy winner, went on to be a professional football player but never got his degree. So, several years ago, he came back and at halftime of the Oklahoma/Texas game up in Norman, they were going to award him his degree.

Well, they brought him out on the field and said, "Mr. Sims, if you answer this one question correctly, we'll award you your college degree. Tell us, what is 2 + 4?" And he thought for a moment, went to the microphone, and said 6. And as one crowd, the crowd stood to their feet and shouted give him another chance.

1 Corinthians 2:6-13. "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. No, we declare God's wisdom, a mystery that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began. None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. However, as it is written: 'What no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, and what no human mind has conceived' the things God has prepared for those who love him—these are the things God has revealed to us by his Spirit."

"The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. For who knows a person's thoughts except their own spirit within them? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. What we have received is not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may understand what God has freely given us. This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words."

Some of you may have seen what is turning out to be the most popular movie of the season. That's Forrest, Forrest Gump. It's about a man who doesn't have a lot of intelligence but possesses a lot of just homespun wisdom. He's always saying, "Mama always says. Mama always says stupid is as stupid does. Mama always says life is like a box of chocolates. You never know what you're going to get. Mama says you can tell a lot about a person by the shoes they wear. Where they've been, where they're going."

Well, you get a little bit of the idea of what wisdom is when you listen to someone like Forrest Gump, and I've read the novel, which is different than the movie itself. In the novel he's with a friend of his who supposedly has a lot more intelligence than he does and they have a flat tire. And Forrest's friend is changing the flat tire, and he's taking the lug nuts off the tire rim and putting them in the hubcap. But when he's putting the spare tire on, he accidentally hits that hubcap and it spills all the lug nuts down into the sewer. And the friend says to Forrest, "Well, nothing we can do now. We can't put this tire on. We can't go anywhere."

And Forrest says, "Well, why not you take one lug nut off the other tires and put one on the one that needs the lug nuts. Just borrow one from each tire and it'll get you to where you're going." And his friend looks at him and says, "Forrest, I can't believe that you are smart enough to figure out something like that. And Forrest looks at him and says I may be crazy but I'm not stupid."

There's a sort of a natural kind of common sense that we're going to be talking about tonight that needs to be compared and contrasted to the wisdom of God. Now, let's learn three things about God's wisdom, or true wisdom.

I. TRUE WISDOM IS REVEALED IN THE SPIRIT OF GOD

True wisdom is revealed by the Spirit of God. Verse 10 is our focus verse for the entire message. "But God has revealed it to us by his Spirit." That means God willingly wants to reveal wisdom by his Spirit. In this passage of Scripture, there are three different spirits mentioned. Did you notice the three different spirits mentioned when we read it?

A. The spirit of the world

Paul says in verse 12, "We have not received the spirit of the world." The spirit of the world is the world of education, intelligence, academia, and it's not the same thing as wisdom. You might call the spirit of the world knowledge and all the knowledge that the world has to share, is not the same thing as wisdom.

I like what one of my favorite preachers, Chuck Swindoll, said about wisdom and knowledge. He says a person may have every earned his degree and course of study in every institution and still not possess wisdom. Wisdom is the capacity to assimilate and appropriate learning prudently. In the truest sense, there's no genuine wisdom apart from God, because wisdom is seeing life from God's point of view.

The spirit of the world sees everything from the perspective of the world itself. Someone said the difference between knowledge and wisdom is knowledge is the ability to take things apart. Wisdom is the ability to put things together.

I've been amazed as I watch Wayne Shea working on a 1956 Buick. He took what was just a rusty, bulk of a frame of a car, and is restoring that car to showroom condition. Over the last five years, I've gone by his shop and watched him as that project has come along and I've just been absolutely, totally amazed. It looks like a 1956 Buick convertible as it would've appeared on the showroom floor.

I am amazed at anyone who can restore old cars. If you give me enough tools and enough time, I could go out here to just about any car in the parking lot and take it apart. That's knowledge. But there's no way I could ever put it back together again. And that's what wisdom is. Wisdom is the ability to take all the knowledge of the world and put it together to see things from God's perspective. Knowledge is just the ability to analyze things—and that's what the world does—

that's why it's called the spirit of the world. Knowledge is needed to pass the test in school, but wisdom is needed to pass the test of life.

Knowledge is learned, wisdom is given. Knowledge comes from looking around, wisdom comes from looking up. Knowledge comes by study; wisdom comes from meditation with God. Wisdom teaches you how to apply your knowledge.

B. The spirit of man

Look at verse 11. Not only does it mention the spirit of the world, but verse 11 says, "For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man's spirit within him?" What is a man's spirit? This is talking about what we call common sense. There's nothing wrong with common sense, in fact it's good to have sanctified common sense, but don't just go by common sense alone. It's often called horse sense. Horse sense keeps a horse from going out and betting on a bunch of men running around a track.

Someone once said horse sense is just stable thinking. That's another good way to look at it. A man can come up with some common sense ideas, and the most basic things we can learn in life, that sometimes comes from the spirit of a man. It doesn't have much to do with the spirit of the world, which is intellectualism and academia.

Mark Twain wrote in one of his little obscure short stories about a man who used to run a ferry across the Mississippi River. And this was just a plain old ordinary man who'd never been to school, and his job was just to run the ferry across the Mississippi River and back. One day, his passenger was a college professor, and this professor was asking ferry operator some questions. "Sir, do you know anything about theology?" And the ferry operator said, "Nope. Don't know nothing about that theology." And the professor looked down his nose at him and said, "Sir, one third of your life is wasted."

They went a little further and the professor said, "Sir, do you know anything about philosophy?" And the ferry operator said, "Nope. Don't know nothing about that philosophy stuff." And the professor looked down his nose at him and said, "Sir, another third of your life is wasted."

They went a little bit further and suddenly they hit a rock right in the middle of the Mississippi River and the ferry capsized, dumping both of them in the middle of the river. The ferry operator started swimming to shore, and the college professor just started splashing in the water. "Help me, help me, help me!" And the ferry operator said, "Professor, do you know anything about swimming?" The professor said no. The ferryman said, "All your life is gone then."

The world tends to tell us that there are certain things you've got to know when the basics are what are important. And so, there's the spirit of the world, that's intellectualism, there's the spirit of a man, which is common sense, but let's look at the third Spirit.

C. The Spirit of God

"What we have received is not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may understand what God has freely given us." (1 Corinthians 2:12) When you become a Christian, the Holy Spirit of God comes to dwell inside of you. We talk about inviting Jesus into our hearts and that's what we do, but let's get our theology straight: God the Father is seated in heaven, and the Bible says that when Jesus was resurrected and after 40 days He ascended into heaven and He is seated at the right hand of God the Father. That's where he is right now making intercession for you and for me. And so, when we talk about receiving Jesus into our hearts, we receive the blessed Holy Spirit who represents Jesus, and He does not bear witness to Himself, He bears witness to Jesus, but He comes and He dwells inside of us.

What does He do when he lives inside of us? He convicts us of sin and He empowers us but he also has revealed to us by his Spirit, the Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. That means it is the Holy Spirit who gives you the ability to understand things that the world cannot understand.

When I was 18, I graduated from high school and I was going to college that fall. I was minister of music in a little country church that ran about 100 in Sunday school. The pastor left at the beginning of the summer to attend seminary and they knew I would be around during the summer, and I had preached some at that church. The pastor had a habit of asking me to preach that morning as I was getting ready to walk in for church on Sunday mornings he'd turn to me and say, "Do you wanna preach this morning?" And I'd say, "Sure." And I'd just get up and preach on the spur of the moment. I enjoyed doing that.

So, they knew I was a preacher and was going to be a preacher and so at the beginning of that summer, they asked me if I would be the interim pastor until I went to college. I know God can bless ignorance, because I was full of it back then. But as I got to know some of the people in that little country farm church, I was amazed at a hog farmer named Gene Wiggins. He taught the adult men's Sunday school class, but the strange thing about it is his wife always went to class with him and she would be his designated Bible reader.

And I sat in on that class some and I was amazed at the insights that this man had about the Bible. Well, we were at a church training class one night that I was teaching and Gene Wiggins, the hog farmer, was there and we were talking about a certain passage of Scripture, and I didn't think anything about it, we were studying a verse of Scripture and I turned and I said Brother Gene, would you read this passage of Scripture for us?

And there were probably six or seven people there, and he said I believe I'll let my wife read it. So, I didn't think much about it, so she read the passage of Scripture and he talked about it and what he had to say was great. He came up to me after that church training class and said, "Brother David; I think there's probably something you need to know. I never went to school a day in my life and I can't read."

Of course I was embarrassed that I had called on him to read not knowing that, but then I was absolutely flabbergasted that this man, who could not read, had such deep insights into the Bible. If you'd listen to him talk about the Bible and God, you'd just be amazed at how this man knew God and the truth about God. Where did he get it? He got it from the Holy Spirit of God. It was the Spirit of God Who revealed that to him. You can't understand God's wisdom without the Holy Spirit.

The other day I came across something Corrie ten Boom wrote that blessed me. Corrie ten Boom clarifies the issue of God's wisdom for us. "Often I've heard people say how good God is. We prayed that it would not rain for our church picnic and look at the lovely weather. Yes. God is good when He sends good weather, but God was also good when he allowed my sister Betsie to starve to death before my eyes in a German concentration camp."

"I remember one occasion when I was very discouraged there. Everything around us was dark and there was darkness in my heart. I remember telling Betsie that I thought God had forgotten us. 'No Corrie,' said Betsie, 'He has not forgotten us. Please don't try to understand it. Simply remember His Word for as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is His steadfast love toward those who fear Him.'" She says without the Holy Spirit, she could not have understood what was going on. And so, wisdom is revealed by the Spirit of God.

II. TRUE WISDOM IS REVEALED TO THE CHILDREN OF GOD

True wisdom is revealed to the children of God. That that kind of wisdom is not available to anyone unless they're in the family of God. It is one of the bonuses we receive as being Christians that God reveals true wisdom to us.

Verse nine is a beautiful verse, and a lot of people say it is their favorite verse but a lot of people don't understand what it's saying. "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.'"

I've heard people talk about that verse and they tell me what God has done for them and what God has planned for them—it is just so wonderful; they can't understand it. That's only half of what God is saying there.

A. Man's perception is limited.

It is saying that God has revealed it to us by his Spirit. In other words, we're looking at truth from two perspectives here. Number one, we learned that man's perception is limited. Verse nine mentions three ways to perceive truth: the eye, the ear and the mind.

B. God's preparation is unlimited.

Wisdom is so powerful you can't see it with your human eyes. Wisdom is so powerful that you cannot hear it with your human ears, and you cannot figure it out with the grey matter

between your ears. But God's children can understand it. Man's perception is limited to eyes, ears, and the mind. But God's preparation is unlimited.

Look at what that verse says. Verse 9. What God has prepared for those who love Him. If you love Him, he's prepared something for you, but a lot of people look at that verse and say it's so wonderful we can't understand it. Verse 10. God has revealed it to you. He's preparing some things for you.

1. A meal

The Bible says he's prepared a meal for you in the presence of your enemies. Spiritual blessings. That's from Psalms 23.

2. A home

The Bible says He's preparing a home for you. "My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you?" (John 14:2)

3. A city

He has prepared a city for you according to Hebrews 11:16 and that's where we're going to live for eternity.

4. An inheritance

"Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. (Matthew 25:34) God has prepared an inheritance for us. In other words, don't just give up and say, "I'll never understand all that God has for me." There are certain things He has revealed to you by His Spirit in the Word things that He is preparing for you.

What does it mean to reveal something? I quoted Simon Peter this morning as I called him to the witness stand. Jesus asked, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?" They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets." (Matthew 16:13-14)

And then Simon Peter made a very wise statement. "You are the Christ. The Son of the living God." Remember what Jesus said next? He said, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood." Did you catch that? He says you did not figure that out with all your neurological synapses inside your head. That was not something you figured out by flesh and blood. He said but my Father, which is in heaven, has revealed it to you.

God revealed truth to him. And that's exactly what Paul is saying here. You can't figure it out with your eyes, you can't figure it out with your ears, you can't figure it out with your mind, but God reveals it to His children by His Spirit.

III. TRUE WISDOM IS REVEALED IN THE WORD OF GOD

Where do you find the resource for wisdom? It's not in the encyclopedia, it's not in the dictionary, and it's not in the textbooks. Where you find true wisdom is in the Word of God.

I came across an interesting statement by Albert Einstein the other day. Einstein, who formulated the theory of relativity, said, "I feel like a man chained. If only I could be set free from the chains of my little intellectual smallness, then I could understand the universe in which I live."

Can you imagine Albert Einstein saying that? If he said that, then what about us? If his intellect is little, what about ours? Well, it's tiny compared to that. But when I read that, I thought what the Bible says is God's Word is not chained. The Bible contains all the wisdom you need.

During World War II, there were a lot of soldiers who were given little New Testaments. Some of them had a little metal cover and some soldiers put these little New Testaments in their shirt pockets. And I don't know about you, but through the years I have seen people who showed me copies of the New Testament where a bullet had dented the cover and supposedly the story was that some soldier had it in his front pocket and when he was shot by the enemy, the Bible stopped the bullet.

Or I've seen other copies of the New Testament that some people said that they were wearing it in their shirt pocket and it didn't even have a metal cover, but the pages of the Bible stopped the bullet and it's like a bullet hole that goes all the way almost to the back of the Bible. And there were some men who used the Bible like that, but that's almost voodooism or superstition to use the Bible as some kind of a protective shield. There's nothing unusual about the cover of this book or the pages of this book. There's nothing unusual even about the ink on the paper. It is the Word of God and the wisdom of God that is in this Book.

Still have your Bible open? I want you to see the final thing the apostle Paul says in verse 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."

Human wisdom has a lot of words of knowledge, but the Bible has words of wisdom.

CONCLUSION

Paul Harvey tells a story about a man in New Jersey whose great aunt died and he didn't think she had very much and apparently she didn't. But she left him a box of books and in the box of books was her family Bible. And he took that box of books and he put it in his attic. And about ten years later, he happened to be up in his attic going through the books and he took out his great aunt's Bible and opened it up and there between the pages of that old Bible was over \$10,000 in currency that she had put there.

He was happy to find it, but he could've kicked himself for not looking sooner in the Bible. And I want to tell you friends, what you find inside the pages of this Book is much more valuable, much more valuable than \$10,000. In it is the wisdom of God.

OUTLINE

TRUE WISDOM IS REVEALED:

I. IN THE SPIRIT OF GOD

- A. The spirit of the world
- B. The spirit of man
- C. The Spirit of God

II. TO THE CHILDREN OF GOD

A. Man's perception is limited:

- 1. Eye
- 2. Ear
- 3. Mind

B. God's preparation is unlimited:

- 1. A meal (psalm 23:5)
- 2. A home (John 14:2)
- 3. A city (Hebrews 11:16)
- 4. An inheritance (Matthew 25:34)

III. IN THE WORD OF GOD

If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. *James 1:5*