

The Natural and Spiritual Person

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[0:00] May the words of my mouth and the meditation of our hearts be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, our strength and our Redeemer.

! Encourage to open up your Bible, your pew Bible and follow along.

So last week we were looking at verse 6 to 10 where Paul speaks of two kinds of wisdom. Do you remember the two kinds of wisdom? A false wisdom which is the man-made wisdom of the world, doomed to perish.

And then there's the true wisdom which is the God-given wisdom. This true wisdom is secret and hidden, Paul tells us.

It cannot be attained by human ingenuity. If it could, the world would have recognized Jesus Christ as the Lord of glory. He whose death on the cross was the wisdom and power of God was rejected by man and crucified.

[1:21] But such was God's power and wisdom that he used human foolishness and blindness to bring about his work of salvation. And we said last week, if you remember, that this wisdom, this true wisdom is a gift from God, given by revelation.

Now, at the center of this revealed wisdom is the gospel of Jesus Christ. And at the center of that gospel is the crucified Messiah.

And that's why Paul would know nothing when he says earlier in chapter 2, I would know nothing among the Corinthians, among you Corinthians, except Jesus Christ and him crucified. That is at the center of God's work of salvation and redemption.

At the center of it is the good news that God sent his Son into our world to die in our stead. And whosoever believe in him, trusting in his finished work upon the cross, will not perish, but have everlasting life.

Now, this plan of God seems so easy to understand. It's the most familiar passage that just disclosed this plan. John 3.16, we all know it.

[2:50] In fact, I bet if you walk up to somebody in the street, there's a very likelihood that they might know it. They might not have docked in the door of a church ever in their life, but they'll be familiar with that passage. Most people can recite this passage that reveals God's plan.

They're familiar with the words, but tragically, they do not grasp its meaning. Because no human mind can apprehend this wisdom on their own.

Where then does this wisdom come from? This true wisdom that is God-given? Where does it come from? Well, we've already said it is God-given, right?

We said that last week. But by what means is it given? Paul tells us in verse 10, doesn't he? He says, These things, these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit.

God, the Holy Spirit, opens our ears to hear. He illuminates our eyes to see Christ.

[4:00] He changes our hearts so we may know our great misery and then receive the great comfort that is Jesus Christ himself.

It is the Spirit, Paul tells us, who searches everything, even the depths of God. Paul is saying that only God knows God.

And if you think about it for a moment, I think you'll agree completely with his point. Because it is part of foolishness to think that we can comprehend the mind of the all-powerful, all-knowing creator of time and space.

And all that is contained in them. Can you imagine that? We who are finite creatures, whose days are like grass, who flourish one moment and in the next moment we are gone like the wind.

How can we then imagine that we can understand the everlasting God? Just think for a moment, if you have a pet, what do you think your cat or your dog understands about your life?

[5:23] And your existence? Have you taken the time to think about it? We have two cats. And when I was writing this, I was thinking about it. To them, to these cats, you are the giver of food and rubs.

You're the protector. You shelter them. You give them food. You give them water. You come and go. Do you think your dog comprehends and worries about the inflation that makes gas prices go up?

Do you think they ever take the time to think about such things? Does your pet understand your monthly bills and the realities of going to work to get paid so you can buy the food that you buy to feed them?

Do you think they can comprehend any of that? No. Of course not. The animal knows you're its owner.

And he or she in turn is affectionate in the way only an animal can be. But you cannot ever pass on your worries, your cares, and your responsibilities over on to that animal.

[6:44] And you say, oh, you lovely pet. Can you just help me share a bit of the load? It's ridiculous to think about it, isn't it?

Because that animal has no category in its mind to grasp any of the responsibilities of your life. It has no category to grasp it.

Well, I want you to think that's how we are in comparison to the God of the universe. In fact, I think I might be giving too much credit to the pets in terms of relation to us, compared to us in relation to the God of the universe.

It is the ight of self-delusion when humans say to themselves such things like, In my search for God, I discovered so and so.

Oh, well, I don't think God is like that. Oh, this is the way God is. Whatever makes us think that we have the category, the qualifications to grasp the infinite God.

[8:05] We cannot begin to search God. He is utterly other, transcendent, beyond us.

We have no categories in our finite minds to grasp the infinite God. Not only we don't have it, and it's gotten even worse since the fall.

Because of sin. Because of our fallen nature. Whatever creaturely capabilities we have has been dulled by our sinful nature.

So that it's even worse. That unless God reveals himself, we have no categories to grasp who he is. Of course, you know the Bible says that nature reveals the wonders of God. So, in fact, and Paul tells us in Romans 1, none of us have any excuse.

[9:10] So I'm not absolving us of knowing God rightly as his creatures, living rightly under him. We have enough to grasp that there is a God.

The point I'm making here is that we have no means to grasp the plan of salvation. That thing that Paul says last week is hidden and secret. And it's disclosed only through the Spirit.

In our own human capabilities and cognition, we can never grasp it. We cannot search the minds even of the person next to us.

Think about it. Even the closest relationship you have, your spouse, your children, you don't know what they think. You don't know what's going on in their minds unless they disclose it to you.

You don't know what's going on in another person's head. How much more? The mind of God. And so Paul tells us in verse 11, For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person which is in him?

[10:22] So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the spirit of God. So Paul is essentially telling us that what is true of the unknowability of human minds is infinitely truer of God's mind.

And that's why he writes in Romans, for example, Romans 11, 33, 34, All the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God. How unsearchable are his judgments.

Hence, how inscrutable his ways. Inscrutable is you can't stand in judgment over God's actions and God's ways. Who are you to stand in judgment over God?

What qualifications do you have? He goes on in Romans, For who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor? Where were you when he created the heavens and the earth?

Maybe you can put yourself in the shoes of Job after he queried God and God appeared to him.

And God starts saying, where were you when I did this and this? We cannot begin to think we can know the mind of God.

[11:41] But there's good news. Paul says, the Spirit, the Spirit, that is the Holy Spirit, which proceeds from God, makes known to us the mind of God.

In other words, only God can, and only God has, made known, as made God known. Paul goes on in verse 12.

He says, Now we have received, not the Spirit of the world, but the Spirit, who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God.

That's wonderful. We have the Spirit, the Spirit who is from God, we have received that Spirit, that we might understand the things freely given us, by God.

Remember that we said last week that this wisdom is God, it's God given, and it's freely given. It's important that we understand the we here, though, that Paul refers to in verse 12, when he says, we have received.

[12:53] It's important that we understand the we here, so we don't fall into the pitfalls that many people still do today. People such as the New Apostolic Reformation, self-appointed new apostles, self-appointed prophets of the day, who thinks now they have revelations on par with Scripture.

We have to be careful not to fall into that trap. The we here, spoken of here by Paul, are the apostles themselves. The apostles.

It is them, the apostles, who have the objective revelation of God, made known to them by Jesus Christ himself.

Jesus Christ reveals himself to the apostles, gave them the mandate to proclaim him, and they, it is the apostles, that have been given the authority and mandate to reveal Christ to us through the Holy Spirit's inspiration.

And so, Paul then says in verse 13, the we again, meaning the apostles, we impart this. What is the this? The wisdom.

[14:05] This is what he's trying to. We impart this wisdom in words, not taught by human wisdom, but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual.

This is the apostolic message. The faith that the apostles teach is from the Spirit, not from human wisdom or human philosophizing.

And this message, this faith, this wisdom is only discernible by those who are in turn spiritual themselves. I hope you can follow Paul's logic in these verses.

He's saying to us that the word of the gospel which speaks of salvation alone, that speaks of salvation in Christ alone, through his atoning death on the cross, that word of the gospel is not man-made wisdom.

It is a revelation from the Holy Spirit given to the apostles who have been turned by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit spoken it and written it in God's Holy Word to us.

[15:20] And the only people who can grasp that Spirit given revelation from the apostles are those who in themselves have the Spirit of God in them so that they can grasp the Word of God.

Interpreting spiritual truths to those who are themselves spiritual. The Holy Spirit inspired them to speak these words, to write them down in the scriptures, and it's the same Holy Spirit that inspires them, that inspired them, that then comes and open our hearts and our ears and eyes to see the wonderful truth in God's Word.

God's wisdom is communicated solely, exclusively, through the Spirit of God. God. It is spoken through Him and it is only to those whom He is giving life through regeneration who can then come and understand, comprehend, and then respond to its message.

That's the point that Paul is making here to us. But here's the wonderful bit. It's not only a once and done thing. God doesn't only speak once and then that's it.

Paul has already told the Corinthians that the gospel of Christ crucified is what he preached to them. And this gospel of Christ, of Christ crucified, was made effective to them, not by sophisticated man-made vision, wisdom rather, but in the demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that their boasting may not be in man, but their boasting may be in the power of God.

[17:19] But now he tells them, your ongoing life in Christ, your growth and knowledge of that wisdom, your growth and knowledge and wisdom of God can even only be done, not by human abilities and faculties, but can only be done in the Spirit's power as well.

God. So here's the thing, you come by the Spirit to comprehend the message of the Gospel and respond in a specific way to come under it and to receive God, Jesus Christ, as Lord and Savior.

That has been done. If you're in Christ, the Holy Spirit has done that in you. He's made it possible. It's not because you're wiser than the man next to you or the woman next to you, that you've heard the Gospel and you've responded to it.

It is the Holy Spirit who has done that. But not only that, in your ongoing walk in Christ, as you take your Bible and you read the words of God in it, as you fellowship with brothers and sisters, as you gather, as you sit now under the teaching and preaching of God's Word, the Holy Spirit is working, is here with you, working in you, illuminating God's Word.

This is a wonderful word. I don't think, if you just take a moment to reflect on what Paul is saying here. You're not alone, brothers and sisters. The Holy Spirit of God is working in you, revealing God's Word to you.

[19:02] And oftentimes people say, well, you know, I find it hard to read my Bible. I just can't understand it. And we think maybe it's because we can't comprehend it in our minds.

But I hope that what you've been, this past two weeks, I've been going to what Paul is saying. It is not your human, you can be a PhD, upon PhD, stack them upon each other, and you will not be able to understand this revelation of God's Word, unless the Spirit of God opens your mind to understand it.

It is only the Spirit of God. So, the answer to you not understanding the Bible, when you read it, it's like, oh, that part is hard. I find it hard, whenever I open my Bible, I find it hard to understand. What do you do then?

Pray, yes, you go to God the Holy Spirit, and you ask Him to open God's Word to you, to illuminate it to you, to help you to understand it, because He has been given to you by Christ Jesus.

He is the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ, proceeding from the Father and the Son, given to you who are in Christ. So, you pray to Him and ask Him.

[20:20] Do you think God answers those kind of prayers? He does. He does. So, the Holy Spirit is the revealer.

He reveals God's design for salvation to the apostles. the secret hidden wisdom of God that was decreed before time. And then the Holy Spirit leads you to receive and believe this truth.

And the Holy Spirit continues to reveal God's wisdom, contained in the Bible, as you meditate on it, coming to it as your spiritual food. But you know, we like to say here at Holy Trinity, and I love that we say it, we like to say that we are spirit-filled Christians.

In fact, if you look at the little caption in the top of your bulletin, it says that Church of the Holy Trinity, biblical, liturgical, spirit-filled. That's one of our taglines.

We like to say that we are spirit-filled Christians. But I hope that you see here that what Paul means by spirit-filled Christians is to be a Bible-believing Christian.

[21:32] Someone who trusts in God's Word revealed. Someone who makes the Word of God our standard of life and faith.

That's what it means to be spirit-filled. To make the Word of God the standard of life and faith. You know, to be spirit-filled Christian is not to know about, you know, it's not this sort of mystical sort of magic thing.

And I think sometimes we, you know, that word spiritual is often used both in the church and in the world. I'm very spiritual. Yeah, I'm not religious, but I'm spiritual. You know, even sometimes Christians say it.

I encourage you not to use it in those terms. To be spiritual is to be word-saturated. To dwell on God's Word richly.

To have the Holy Spirit open it to you. To grow in its wisdom. Spirit-empowered. You know, the Spirit of God will not reveal to you what you will eat for dinner tonight.

[22:49] He might not even necessarily reveal to you what job offer you should accept. Alright, am I surprised you a bit? But there's no promise that the Holy Spirit will reveal that.

By the way, we have the Spirit of God so that He helps us to make those decisions. It's not like the Spirit is, you know, absent. He will help you to make decisions in conformity to His Word.

That's our wisdom. That's how it becomes active. But you don't read God's Word and say, oh God, you know, reveal to me here, you know, what I should eat for dinner.

That's not the wisdom that is in view here. What it means to be Spirit-filled Christians is to be the kind of Christians who are led by the Spirit to understand and to trust God's Word.

Spirit. And the problem is that we often think that to be spiritual is to have a higher human capacity for intuition or perception that is grounded in what?

[23:59] Our feelings. We think that what it means to be spiritual is to have sort of a higher perception or capacity grounded in our feelings.

But Paul will have us understand that those who are spiritual in the way that God understands that, the way the Bible speaks of it, those who are spiritual are those who depend and submit to the Holy Spirit of God to illuminate God's Word to them.

That is what it means to be spiritual. And I want you to listen to me very carefully here. Because I want you to see that God in His providence He may use your feelings and use your intuitions to lead you at times.

Because He is the Lord of creation and there is nothing He cannot use. So especially as Christians who are filled with the Spirit of God who are submitted to the leading of the Spirit sometimes God in His providence may use your feelings and your intuitions.

But how do you measure those feelings and intuitions? That's the question. And this is what I'm trying to say. That even as God uses that the Holy Spirit is not the illuminator of your feelings and intuitions.

[25:33] That's not what He primarily is there for. He is supremely the revealer of God's Word. That's what the Holy Spirit does. And so let me give you an example.

So for example when you have a feeling or intuition you're a Christian you know Jesus you love Jesus you're walking by faith in Him and you have an intuition about something. How do you measure that to know that it is of God?

Do you just say well you know I have the Spirit I'm just going to go with it? No. Because you also know what the Bible speaks of by the human heart. Right? It's desperately wicked.

You know the world tells us trust your feelings trust your heart follow your heart don't follow your heart. The Bible tells you don't follow your heart. It is desperately wicked. And so when you have those intuitions and they might be prodding from the Spirit from the Holy Spirit but how do you how do you gauge it?

How do you measure it? You measure it by checking it with God's revealed objective truth. And so for example if that feeling or intuition does not accord with God's revealed objective truth what then do you what's your conclusion about those feelings intuitions where are they from?

[26:50] They cannot be from the Holy Spirit. It just cannot be. The Holy Spirit will never lead you away from God's Word. The Holy Spirit will never lead you away from Christ.

The Holy Spirit will never lead you from the proclamation of Christ crucified. And so whenever that happens you can know right away as Spirit filled Christians this isn't of God.

because this is not in accordance with God's revealed truth. That's how we measure it. That's what it means to be Spirit filled Christians. We turn away from the lies of the world and we cling to God's Word.

That's what Spirit filled Christianity looks like. And so Paul having shown that the Holy Spirit is required to understand the mind of God revealed in God's Word Paul now tells us he tells us that there are essentially only two kinds of people.

The natural person and the spiritual person. There's only two kinds of people in the world. The natural person and the spiritual person. And I want you to examine your own mind.

[28:06] Again remember no one else can know your mind except perhaps only God knows your mind and you. But examine your mind and honestly examine and ask yourself which of the two am I?

Am I a natural person or am I a spiritual person? This is the natural person. The natural person relies on man-made wisdom. The wisdom of the world.

Look there in verse 14. The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God for they are folly to him. And he's not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.

The revelation of God the truth of our true state and our desperate need to turn to Jesus as the way the truth and the life.

That can never be accepted by the natural person. They don't accept it because they don't understand it. or rather they cannot understand it because it is foolishness.

[29:14] All that good news that is good news to us is foolishness to them. They cannot understand because they do not have the Spirit of God. Who alone can give understanding?

Who causes us to make sense of the hidden things of God? But the spiritual person. Paul gives us this in contrast in verse 15 and 16.

The spiritual person on the other hand judges all things but he is himself to be judged by no one.

For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?

But we have the mind of Christ. The Spirit of God who searches all things and knows the deep things of God reveals them to those who have the Spirit of God.

The Spirit gives understanding where there formerly was none. Have you ever thought about the fact that perhaps like me I grew up in the church my parents were Christians I grew up in the church I heard the gospel since I was an infant.

[30 : 22] and it's eventually the truth that I've heard numerous times dawned on me.

It's not because I all of a sudden became wise I read more books I knew more propositional truths it is the Holy Spirit it is have you ever wondered that about yourself too?

You might have even listened to the same preacher often it's just at a certain moment think about your coming to faith in Jesus Christ and this is what Paul means when he says you can't boast because it's the Holy Spirit that opens your mind to grasp to comprehend to understand and to respond in faith to the Word of God and that's what it means to be the spiritual person the spiritual God searches all things and then opens it up to you the Spirit is the one who has the illuminating power but I want you to consider verse 15 and 16 closely before we close it's quite fascinating verse 15 and 16 here Paul says the spiritual person judges all things but is himself to be judged by no one for who has understood the mind of the Lord so it's to instruct him the spiritual person is the person who after all have the

Spirit of Christ and therefore because that spiritual person has the Spirit of Christ he can discern all things that's what the word judge here means having the Spirit of God you have access to God given wisdom and therefore you can discern between truth and falsehood do you know that brothers and sisters in Christ if you have the Spirit of God you can discern between truth and falsehood it is done by the power of the Holy Spirit you judge you can judge all things discern all things and you cannot be judged by anyone now we must be careful about that you cannot be judged by anyone you can run with that and run in the wrong direction you know you find yourself in traffic court for example and you say your honor you can you know the Spirit of God no that's not what Paul is saying here what Paul means here is that the world cannot anyone that Paul is speaking of here is the world the world cannot judge you how often do you as believer in Jesus Christ feel judged by the world you feel like you're under the world's judgment what do they say about you in fact we mentioned it briefly downstairs in our adult center what does the world think about you because you're in Christ you're foolish you believe in a foolish gospel you're brainwashed Bible thumper you live in the primitive age get with it come into the 21st century and they say more uglier things than that they might eventually because you stand on God's word and God's truth they will eventually call you bigot in the world in the current climate that we live in like the early Christians they will call you haters of men because you stand on God's truth but Paul wants us to know here because you have the spirit of God do not care about the world's judgment because after all what has

[34 : 11] Paul just told us about their capacity to understand the truth they don't have it they don't and so you cannot sit under their judgment they may say your belief is foolishness they may call you all sorts of names but in truth they have no capacity because they lack discernment to sit in judgment over you how can they because they do not have the mind of the Lord they're only equipped with worldly wisdom which is doomed to failure so as one writer puts it they cannot match wits with God and so the point Paul is making is contending with the Corinthian problem remember the Corinthian problem he's contending with it the Corinthians think of themselves as spiritual they think of themselves as being mature remember that they say the Corinthian

Christians say to themselves we don't have to dwell on all that cross and crucifixion stuff we've graduated we employ a deeper and higher spirituality they say to themselves we have all spiritual gifts especially we can speak in tongues they say to themselves but Paul will have them know you Corinthians indeed have the spirit of Christ because it is true him that you heard the proclamation of the gospel and have believed and if that is true how then can you be so captivated with man made wisdom that you bypass the wisdom of God that's the Corinthian problem they're so enamored and captivated with man made wisdom we ought to be on God for that same problem and I missed instead of trying out like the psalmist that God may open our eyes so that we may see the wonderful

