

Spiritual Discernment

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[0 : 00] Um, thanks for all coming. Um, thanks for being here tonight. Uh, you don't have to be here tonight. Um, so you're very kind. Um, can I especially thank Mark and Andrew, uh, for their generosity, um, and possibly by the end of this serious lack of judgment, um, in allowing me to come here and share God's word with you. Um, but before we go any further, why don't we pray?

Heavenly father, may your spirit reveal to us your thoughts. May it give to us your wisdom. And may we have the mind of Christ. And we pray these things in your name. Amen. Can I ask you a question? I'm going to ask it anyway. Why is it? Why is it that so many people call themselves Christian?

And there are so many people who identify themselves as Christian, but they live lives that, well, they just don't look Christian at all. In fact, their lives look exactly the same as the life of any other person. How is it that someone can come to church every Sunday morning and yet get absolutely hammered on a Sunday night? By the way, hammered means drunk.

Working hard is a good thing. Working hard is a good thing. But why do so many Christians become slaves to their careers? Why is it that our life's ambition sometimes or sometimes too often is exactly the same as the ambitions of everyone else to get a well-paying, respectable job and to live a comfortable and cushy life?

Well, if there ever was a group of Christians whose lives were so, well, not Christian, it was the church in a place called Corinth. It was the people in our text tonight. You see, they may have been a church, but looking at them and looking at their lives, you probably wouldn't have guessed it. You probably wouldn't have guessed it.

[1 : 59] Now, what was going on in the church? The Corinthian church was dividing into factions. They were dividing into factions on the lines of a cult of celebrity. You had Paul over here. You had Apollos. You had Peter. And you even had Jesus. And these were the celebrities around whom fan clubs were forming, basically.

Christians were dividing along the lines of who was the most impressive speaker? Who was the most eloquent person? Who was the most impressive? Who was the most charismatic leader? It was almost as if the Corinthians in that church had seen people become diehard fans of other speakers outside the church. They saw some people calling themselves, you know, we're going to get together and we're going to be massive fans of this one guy and we'll call ourselves Beliebers. And another group will call themselves Directioners. See, there's the cultural link to the thing before. That's the only remote relevance that it had. But then some people within the church would ask, well, okay, what about Paul? Paul's pretty good, isn't he? But then others may have said, no, he's such a boring preacher.

Have you heard him be preached so long that someone fell out of a window and died? Maybe you should look at Apollos. Now, that's one smart cookie right there. And so, in many ways, that Christians in Corinth were behaving just like every other non-Christian celebrity-obsessed groupie.

[3 : 26] But why were these Christians so obsessed with this? Why were these Christians so obsessed, so taken and enamored with power, with ambition, with intelligence, with influence?

Well, if you could look at your Bibles, we're going to jump and I'm going to steal a little bit from next week. But just to set the context, in chapter 3, verse 1, what does Paul say?

And I'll be reading from the ESV. Paul says, Why were these Christians so obsessed with the gifts, with the talents, with the celebrity of individual people?

Quite simply, they're immature. They're immature. And Paul's message to them is quite clear. What do you say to someone who's immature? I don't have children yet. You'd be pleased to know.

But when I was much younger, what would my parents say to me? Actually, they still say it to me. Grow up. Grow up. If they were mature. If they were mature, they wouldn't be saying, I follow Paul or I follow Apollos.

[4 : 37] They may have been Christian. These Corinthian Christians may have been Christian in their own right, but gosh, they were behaving like a group of five-year-olds. They didn't have what Paul called the mind of Christ.

The mind of Christ. And so what are we doing here tonight? What are we looking at tonight? In the 10 verses from verses 6 to 16, Paul has written to the Christians in Corinth.

And by extension, he's written to us here tonight. And so this is eminently relevant for us. And his message is that if we grow up, if we grow up, and if we have the mind of Christ, then we will know how to live as Christians.

We can make decisions about how to live, how to think, how to act, not with the world's wisdom, but with God's wisdom. If we have the mind of Christ, we can know the wisdom of God.

If we have the mind of Christ, we can know the wisdom of God. And look with me at verse 6. And God's wisdom is exactly where Paul begins.

[5 : 47] It's a good place to start. He begins by showing the Corinthian church that they were obsessed with celebrity. They were obsessed with the individual merits and capabilities of people. But they were doing so because they were following the world's wisdom.

They were doing so because they were following the world's wisdom. That's how the world thought. And they were following in suit. But when compared with God's wisdom, the world's wisdom is, to put it crudely, absolute rubbish.

Absolute rubbish. So let's look at verse 6. Yet among the mature, we do impart wisdom. Although it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age who are doomed to pass away, but we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glory.

None of the rulers of this age understood this, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written, what no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined what God has prepared for those who love him.

Paul sets for us two kinds of wisdom. There are two kinds of wisdom that Paul puts before us. On one hand, there's the wisdom of this age. And on the other, there is the wisdom of God. Over here we find what we'll call the world's wisdom.

[7 : 09] And over here, we'll find what we call God's wisdom. And so let's first look at the wisdom of the world. While the Corinthians were true Christians in their own right, they were living in accordance with the world's wisdom, with what the world would say, what the culture told them.

It was, what Paul says, the wisdom of this age that led them to obsess over power and celebrity. And Paul says that this wisdom, where does it come from? Who does it belong to?

The rulers of this age, the very people, the very people that the Corinthians and the people of that time were basically hero-worshipping and seeking to follow.

The obsession with power and influence wasn't just for the plebs. It wasn't just for the commoner. It wasn't just for the people down who were nameless.

It was the prevailing culture among the elite who everyone wanted to be like. Who everyone wanted to be like. The most influential human wisdom is that which controls the decisions and actions of those in authority.

[8 : 17] Let me say that one more time. The most influential human wisdom is that which controls the decisions and actions of those in authority.

Almost everyone today, if you go out into the world, you open your newspaper, you listen to the news, almost everyone today won't dare, won't even think of, questioning the belief that men and women, that us here tonight, are inherently good.

We're pretty good. It's not just that we're pretty good, we're actually, at our core, good people. I don't know if you're familiar with someone called William Wilberforce, but he said in his day that the bulk of professed Christians, meaning almost all people who call themselves Christian, are used to speak of man as of a being who naturally pure and good and inclined to all virtue and good, is sometimes almost involuntarily, involuntarily drawn out of the right course or so overpowered by the violence of temptation.

What's he saying? Well, we don't mean to do bad things. Bad things just happen to us. We get drawn away from our natural impulse to do good to everyone else.

He's saying, vice and sin with them is rather an accidental and temporary rather than a constitutional and habitual distemper. Big words.

[9 : 42] But can you hear what he's saying? Can you hear what he's saying? He's saying, the world's wisdom tells us that we are, at our core, good people. It tells us that anything bad we do, anything bad that we do, doesn't come from us.

It happens to us. We don't sin. Sin isn't a word. Sin doesn't really happen. We just make mistakes. We just make mistakes. What does a belief in our inherent goodness lead to?

Socially, look around. What does it lead to? I think it leads to a culture of entitlement. Because let's face it, the rationale is we're awesome. We're so good that we have untouchable, fireproof rights. And if you would question them or so much as go near them, you are denying me what I rightfully deserve. What I rightfully deserve.

We can see that, how that's playing out in the culture today and the policy debates that you see on TV. I was listening to Mark's sermon again last week and I realized he stole my thunder. But it's okay.

[10 : 56] I'm going to go there again. How is the same-sex marriage debate framed today? How is it framed? What's the discourse? What's the language that's used?

It's that I have the right to marry whoever I want. Does it matter that they're of the same sex? I have the right to adopt a child even if that means depriving the child of their biological father or mother. Now, don't misunderstand me. Please don't misunderstand me. The point isn't that rights in themselves are bad things. There are such things as rights. In fact, human rights are a fundamentally Christian concept.

But the problem crops up. The real problem arises when we believe ourselves to be so inherently good, incapable of doing wrong and on the off occasion when we do do wrong, it's just accidental. We didn't really mean it. The problem is when that culture overtakes, when that culture overrules, where what happens is what others owe to us becomes far more important than what we owe to others.

[12 : 03] It's when rights trump responsibilities. Now, I think, I think in our day and age that that is how the world is telling us to live.

That you're inherently good and you're entitled to all the good things in the world because yes, that's right, you are awesome. But do you see how that culture, how that wisdom is totally inconsistent with the gospel?

It is totally inconsistent with God's wisdom. What does the gospel tell us? It tells us that we're not inherently good. In fact, we are at our core radically sinful people.

We don't deserve good things. In fact, let me clarify, if we deserve anything, if we deserve anything, what we deserve is judgment and hell for rebelling against God and choosing to live our lives our way.

And so let me ask, on that final day when we stand before God face to face, what are we going to say? What are we going to say when we stand before the gates of heaven? Are we going to say, God, I have a right to enter heaven.

[13 : 12] I have a right to enter heaven. I don't think so. Well, I hope not. I would advise against it. But, think for a moment, and I like hymns, which is what I'm going to quote from this one.

Before the throne of God above, I have a strong and perfect plea. The great high priest whose name is love, whoever lives and pleads for me. It is not a matter of our entitlement to enter heaven. It is a matter of what God has done for us. The gospel is not about what God or anyone else owes us. It is about what we owe God and yet what God has done to pay our debt.

That is the culture of the world which flies in the face of the gospel. And the world's wisdom, if you continue reading, it says, who does it belong to? It belongs to the rulers of this age.

The rulers of this age. Now, who wouldn't want that? If this wisdom belongs to those, you know, the movers and shakers of the world, why wouldn't you want it?

[14 : 22] Well, there's a sting in the tail, isn't there? I think there is a sting in the tail. These very rulers, the people that you and I and the people in Corinth wanted to be like, they are doomed to pass away and with them will go their so-called wisdom.

I hate to put it a bit crudely and a bit bluntly, but death is the great equaliser because once you're dead, let's face it, who gives? Who cares? What wisdom is there?

Even if wisdom is there, you're not really there at all yourself to enjoy it or to follow it. The day will come where the rulers of this world will pass away and with them will go their wisdom.

And yet, in stark contrast, in stark contrast, look at God's wisdom. It has been decreed before the ages for our glory. It exists from eternity to eternity.

It sits outside time itself and it will never pass away. It will never pass away. You see, the day is coming and the day is fast approaching, when the kings and the rulers and the opinion setters and the cultural commentators of this world have been long forgotten.

[15 : 36] What will stand? What will remain? God and his wisdom. But it's more than that. It's more than that. It's for our glory.

It's for our glory. What does that mean? Last week and the week before, we learnt that to us who are being saved, to us who are being saved, the word of the cross, the wisdom of God is the power of God.

The wisdom of God is Jesus Christ and him crucified. The wisdom of God is the great message that the very son of God dying in our place, dying in the place of rebels who were rotten to the core and deserved only death.

death. It is the great message of Jesus Christ, the saviour of the world and it's called the gospel. Jump down to verse 9 for a moment because this is what God has to say about his wisdom called the gospel.

What no eye has seen nor ear heard nor the heart of man imagined what God has prepared for those who love him. I think that is a beautifully rich quote because it shows us on so many levels that God's wisdom is not just true.

[16 : 58] Though it be that, it is good. It is beautiful and it is for our glory. The wisdom of God is mighty to save.

And so brick by brick, brick by brick, God's wisdom demolishes the world's wisdom. It challenges the belief in our inherent goodness that this world would have us believe.

And it takes a sledgehammer to the culture of entitlement that has poisoned our world. Friends, the Corinthians were living as if they were non-Christians. They were living as if they were non-Christians following the world's wisdom.

The fact that they were so obsessed with how impressive and how influential their leaders were just laid bare their immaturity. It's as every parent would say, grow up, grow up, stop thinking like the world and start living in light of God's glorious wisdom.

The message of your salvation for your glory. And that message is not just to them. That message is to us. We have to do the same.

[18 : 07] We have to live. We have to think. We have to act with the wisdom of God. There's a problem though. There's a difficulty. Unlike the world's wisdom, unlike the culture that you can hear, that you can ingest, that you can get effectively by living just by osmosis.

The wisdom of God isn't broadcast on Q&A; at night. The wisdom of God is not written in Steve Jobs' biography. In verse 7, we see that God's wisdom is what?

What does it say? God's wisdom is secret and hidden. It cannot be known. It is impossible to find.

Have a look at verse 8. Even the rulers of this age, for all their power, for all their influence and their apparent wisdom, even they couldn't understand it. Even they couldn't understand it.

For if they had, they wouldn't have crucified the Lord of glory. If they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. What we can see is that even the wisest, even the most powerful of men, the very people who you would expect to pick up on this thing, they were the people that totally missed it.

[19 : 25] They totally missed it. They were blind to recognize the Savior. We want to live. We want to think. We want to act.

Not with the wisdom of the world, but with the wisdom of God. But you may ask, well, if you're not, I'll ask on your behalf, if such great minds couldn't find it, if such great minds and such powerful, influential people couldn't see it, what chance do we have?

What hope is there for me? How can we, mere mortals, mere commoners, find the wisdom of God? Well, that is a great question and I'm glad you asked it. So why don't we read from verse 10? These things God has revealed to us through the Spirit.

For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. For who knows a person's thoughts except the Spirit of that person which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God

except the Spirit of God.

[20 : 32] 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. And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom, but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual.

Verse 10, one more time. These things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. How do we find God's wisdom?

How do we obtain the wisdom of God? Through the Spirit. But, let's back up for a moment. There is an assumed point here, isn't there?

There is a point that we have to note before anything else. And that point is that we can't earn and that we can't work for God's wisdom. God reveals it to us.

The initiative doesn't come from us. We can't go out and search for it and demand that we get God's wisdom. No. The wisdom comes from God. God and that, that is the very reason why even the greatest minds and the most powerful rulers couldn't understand God's wisdom.

[21 : 48] They couldn't understand God's wisdom and this is why. It's because God had not revealed it to them. No PhD, no listing in the BRW rich list, no commercial success, none of that.

None of that will give us the eyes to see God's wisdom. None of that will give us the mind to know God's thoughts. Who gives us God's wisdom? How do we get it? God reveals his wisdom to us through the spirit.

God gives us his spirit so that we can know his thoughts. Look with me at verses 11 and 12. For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person which is in him.

No one comprehends the thoughts of God except the spirit of God. Now we have received not just the spirit of the world but the spirit who is from God that we might understand the things freely given us by God.

As I look out and I see you all down there, there's no way that I can know what you're thinking. There's no way that I can know what you're thinking. In some respect I'd rather not know what you're thinking.

[22 : 59] But I can take a guess, can't I? I can look at your facial expression, I can look at your body language. If your eyes are closed and your head's down I'll assume that you're praying. I can't guarantee that.

But I can take a guess, I can try. But I don't think, and I think you can agree with me on this that you're probably hoping that I can't read your mind. I can't read your mind.

Only you can know your own thoughts. Only you can know your own thoughts. And in the same way, in the same way, no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.

And this is the very reason, this is the very reason why some of the smartest people in our world today refuse to accept the Gospel of God. They refuse to buy the Gospel.

They say, that is a load of rubbish. I refuse to believe it. And it's a bit threatening, isn't it? You look at them, these are people who have like five doctrines in ten different sorts of things.

[24 : 04] I mean, I just finished five years of uni and I still don't know anything at all. But these are very smart people. You know, you've got your Richard Dawkins, Stephen Hawking, Sheldon Cooper.

But, these are the people that you can't deny their brilliance. You can't deny the fact that they are smart and that they are intelligent.

But, but, in one sense, at least maybe in this one respect, they're no different from the rest of us mere mortals. Just like us.

There's nothing in them. There's nothing in them. There's nothing that will entitle them, that will enable them to find the wisdom of God. There is nothing in them, inherent to them.

Not their intelligence, not their degree. Doesn't matter that they went to Harvard. None of that matters when it comes to knowing the wisdom of God. God gives us his wisdom through his spirit.

[25 : 13] And without the spirit of God, none of us, not you, and not me, none of us, can know the thoughts of God. One more hymn.

Amazing grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me. I once was lost, but now am found, was blind, but now I see. How do we now see?

We have the eyes to see, not because of our own foresight, but in spite of our own blindness. Only God can open our eyes.

Don't worry. That's not a depressing thought. It shouldn't be a depressing thought. I can imagine why it may be, though. You may think, oh, well, if God's going to reveal it, and I've got nothing in me, then I've got no chance.

Well, in one sense, acknowledge that, but then understand that this is not depressing. It's the greatest hope that we have. It's the greatest hope for all of us normal people.

[26 : 17] I'm not going to speak for you, but at least for me. We're not intellectual geniuses. We're not intellectual geniuses. We're normal. We're not anything necessarily spectacular.

But what this tells us is that we don't need to work and pour our blood, sweat, and tears in a vain effort to try and find the wisdom of God. We don't have to.

All we need to do is come before the foot of the cross and ask the Spirit to reveal His wisdom.

Practically speaking, this gives a lot of meaning to prayer, doesn't it?

Why do we pray? Well, because if we need God to reveal His wisdom to us, if there's nothing in us that can enable us to understand it, then asking and praying for God to open our eyes is the first thing that we should be doing.

So, whenever we open our Bibles at night, when we go to sleep, before we go to sleep, rather, whenever we listen to a sermon, whenever we think about the things of God, pray.

[27 : 27] Pray that the Holy Spirit would open our eyes to see and to know the thoughts of God. Prayer matters. But the Spirit of God does much more.

It does much more than reveal God's wisdom to us. It's the means by which we pass it on to others.

Have a look at verse 13 with me. And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom, but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual or combining spiritual truths with spiritual words.

Well, what does this mean for us here at Holy Trinity Doncaster? What does it mean for our church? I would like to put to you that it means two things. It probably means more than two, but let's just focus on two tonight.

The first thing is we can't let our greatest strength become our greatest weakness. I think most people here would be able to agree with me that at our church, we have quite reasonably solid Bible teaching, possibly with the exception of this week, but we'll see how that goes.

But that does place us at an acute risk, doesn't it? It does place us at an acute risk of failing to trust in the Spirit of God to reveal His truth to us.

[28 : 46] I remember someone told me that it's very common, I'm not a Bible college student, but from what I understand, it's very common if you're in college and you've got to prepare a sermon and you're low on time, before you consider the text in your own right, you've got Wayne Grudem there and a stack of other commentaries and you'll just refer to that and they'll carry you through.

Well, commentaries and theological textbooks, they can really help us. They do really help us. And I'm sure they would agree with me when I say this, but the truth is, Wayne Grudem isn't the Spirit of God.

It's easy for us, it's easy for us to rely on other aids but without relying on the Spirit. It's possible, it's possible on one hand to intellectually comprehend the truth of Scripture and yet at the same time totally missed the point.

Totally missed the point. Without the Spirit opening our eyes to see God's wisdom, the truth won't take root in our hearts. And like the Corinthians, we will just continue to live like everyone else. Not with God's wisdom, but with the world's wisdom. Secondly, how we present the Gospel matters. How we present the Gospel matters.

[30 : 11] I think everybody here would accept that the content of the Gospel is of first importance. You've got to get that right. You at least have to get that right. But once you've got that right, we can't neglect the communication of it.

We can't neglect how we present the Gospel to other people. Leon Morris, in his commentary, so commentaries aren't all bad, he said, the worldly wise way is not the way to communicate or commend the truth of God.

The worldly wise way is not the way to commend the truth of God. I'm going to get myself in trouble now, but it's fashionable these days.

It's very fashionable these days, I think, to share the Gospel in many different ways. And I think we need to be thinking intentionally about how we can present the Gospel to this world in creative ways, in ways that are easy for them to understand.

But, but, I think it's fashionable in our day and age and in our city for Christians to share the Gospel through entertainment.

[31 : 17] Through entertainment. Now, you have what can only be described as concerts, I enjoy concerts, but in this context, you have what can only be described as concerts, spit it out with smoke machines and big men who run through walls of ice, motivational speakers who tell you, you know, you can eat the cookie and buy the shoes or you can have your best life now.

This is insane. It's absolutely insane. But God's wisdom, the Gospel, is not shared through Justin Bieber-esque concerts filled with 14-year-old screaming girls.

The Gospel, the Gospel, is shared. Look at verse 13. Spiritual words. We must use words taught by the Spirit.

God's wisdom is revealed to us through God's Spirit and we must share God's wisdom in God's Spirit. We're nearly there.

Earlier today, my mum told me to keep it to 30 minutes, so I'm probably finding that already. But verse 14, we're nearly there. The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly, they're foolishness to him, and he's not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.

[32 : 34] discerned. 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 as to instruct him?

For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ. We have the mind of Christ. Do you see what Paul's saying? The unbeliever, the person who doesn't have God's Spirit in him, cannot possibly, cannot possibly understand spiritual things, cannot possibly understand or comprehend or digest the things that come from the Holy Spirit. To him, a life lived with God's wisdom makes no sense at all. Why would you come here every Sunday night and listen to this? That man, what Paul calls the natural man, simply does not have the capacity to understand anything from the Spirit.

It's not simply due to a lack of desire, though that's there too. It's principally due to a lack of capacity. God's wisdom can only be known by God's Spirit and by those to whom God chooses to reveal it.

[33 : 56] Without the Spirit, without the Spirit, Christianity is foolishness. It's foolishness. And so, for that natural man, for that man who does not have the Spirit in him, for him to try and understand the wisdom of God, it's like deaf men judging music.

And so, what does this mean for us? If Holy Trinity Doncaster commits to doing ministry with God's wisdom and not the world's, I think on one level we should expect it to look a little bit different.

And I don't mean, you know, different alternative way, I mean, you know, foolish. I think that would be a natural implication. Have a look at verse 15.

The spiritual person judges or discerns all things but is himself to be judged or understood by no one. The world will look at us, the world will look at us and just not get it.

The way we do things won't be the same as the way the world does things. The way that we do church, I think, maybe I'm wrong here, but I don't think the way we do church will be the same as the outcome-driven culture of Colin Street.

[35 : 14] I don't think it will be. I think if we live our lives with God's wisdom, it's going to look strange. I think it's going to look radically countercultural because it's not going to be about profit.

It's not going to be about performance benchmarks. We're not going to be submitting all our ministers to KPIs and performance benchmarks and, you know, adjusting their salaries on the basis of how many people get converted each year with a specific definition of what counts as a conversion.

I don't think that's what we're going to go down. Now, that's an extreme example. But I think the way that we do church will look foreign and will look strange to the world around us.

Paul then quotes from Isaiah chapter 40, verse 13, and he asks, I think, one of the most poignant questions in all the scripture. for who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?

For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him? If you studied year 12 English, you will know that that is called a rhetorical question.

[36 : 22] And if we look at Isaiah, what's the implied answer? No one. No one can understand the mind of God. But, but, we have the mind of Christ.

Friends, do you know what? Do you want God's wisdom? Do you want the discernment and the ability to make decisions about how to live, how to think, how to act with God's wisdom?

Then we must have the mind of Christ. Here's the principle. If we have the spirit of God, we will have the mind of Christ.

And if we have the mind of Christ, we will gain the wisdom of God. If we have the spirit of God, we will have the mind of Christ.

And if we have the mind of Christ, we will gain the wisdom of God. So what does this mean for us? As a church, mapping out where our congregation wants to go over the next few years.

[37 : 29] Well, according to the predetermined title of this sermon that Mark gave me, spiritual discernment is a step in the recipe for a healthy church. It's necessary to have a healthy church.

Do we want to grow up? Do we want to mature? Do we want to have God's wisdom? Do we as a church plead with God in prayer to reveal that wisdom to us through his spirit?

Do we as a church have the mind of Christ? As a congregation, we're gearing up for an evangelistic festival in late September and early October. It'll be three weeks. Encourage you to come, bring all your friends.

There are three missions, three purposes that we have in that. You can collect a card from Mark or from someone else later today. But I just want to let you know of what that second of the three missions is.

The second mission is to engage with society and to connect our Christian worldview to the issues in our culture. I kind of think, firstly, that's really hard.

[38 : 36] And secondly, in order to do that, we have to have the spiritual discernment and the mind of Christ. Because in verse 15, Paul promises us something. He says that if we have the mind of Christ, we can judge and we can think rightly about not just some things, but about all things.

And all means all here. Well, in conclusion, two greatest words that we've ever spoken. If there ever was a man in human history who knew how to connect his Christian worldview over here with the issues in his culture, it is, as some of my friends would know who I'm going to say, William Wilberforce.

I have to say that, given that I'm reading his book right now. He had the spirit of God, which gave him the mind of Christ, which revealed the wisdom of God.

So he was a Christian politician in the 17th century, and he embarked on a mission to abolish the slave trade and slavery itself throughout the British Empire. And this is what Wilberforce said of so many so-called Christians of his time.

And so as I read this, we should be asking ourselves, does this describe us? And this is what he wrote. The truth is, our opinions are not formed from the perusal of the word of God.

[40 : 08] The Bible lies on the shelf unopened. And we would be wholly ignorant of its contents, except for what we hear occasionally at church, or for the faint traces which our memories may still retain of the lessons of our earliest infancy.

Is that us? Does that describe us? That though we would call ourselves Christians, we know not how to live as Christians.

So friends, as we seek to engage with society, as we seek to connect our Christian worldview in this mission, with the issues in our culture, may we seek God's wisdom to live, to think, and to act with the mind of Christ.

Let's pray. Heavenly Father, in your goodness and your grace, you've given us your Son. And you have been so gracious to us.

Father God, I pray that you would forgive us for all those moments in every day of our lives where we bring shame to your name, where we live lives that just can't be recognized as being Christian, where we make decisions, exercise judgment, not with the mind of Christ, but with the wisdom of the world.

[41 : 32] Forgive us, Father God, for being led astray and forgive us, God, for living our lives not with your wisdom, but with the world's wisdom. And so, Father God, may your Spirit continually reveal to us your truth.

May it open the eyes of our heart so that we can see all things through your eyes. Give us the mind of Christ.

Amen.