

True vs. Worldly Wisdom

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Preacher: Mike Loosa

[0:00] Good morning. Good morning, church. Is it on?

It's okay. All right. The scripture passage today is 1 Corinthians 2.6-3.4.! 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 of 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, no ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him.

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

[1:31] And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom, but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual. The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually 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?

But we have the mind of Christ. But I, brothers, could not address you as spiritual people, but as people of the flesh, infants in Christ, I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for it. And even now you are not yet ready, for you are still of the flesh. For while there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not of the flesh and behaving only in a human way?

For when one says, I follow Paul, and another, I follow Apollos, are you not being merely human? Amen. This is the word of the Lord.

[2:48] Is anybody else feeling tired today? I feel like we're tired in this space. It just feels that, like, like everybody here, you know, it's February, it's really, really cold, as Randy mentioned.

It's kind of gloomy outside. But, you know, what's going on in this space this morning, and we talked about this a few weeks ago, it's just, it feels like just an ordinary gathering, right?

We're all coming here. We come to church every Sunday. We gather with one another every Sunday, and that's pretty normal. But it's in this normal, ordinary gathering of the saints that God's extraordinary power is at work, right?

God's extraordinary power. His spirit is here among us. We just read a text about the spirit of God. He is here. And even though we're tired, God's power is here, and he wants to speak to us today through his word.

So I'm asking, I'm saying this for my own good here, because I feel tired. I feel weary this morning, and I know that some of you do. But let's give ourselves, let's give ourselves, let's attend to this word of God.

[3:54] This is his word. This is not my word. This is God's word. So let's attend to this. And this is an act of worship. Like, the worship isn't just the singing, right? Matt mentioned Romans 12. Worship is all of life, and part of life is this right now, as we listen to the word preached.

So let's go back before the Lord in prayer, because we need him so much. Heavenly Father, yeah, we're tired. We're weary, Lord. Lord, but, you know, as we saw in Isaiah not that long ago, you, Lord, you strengthen the weak and the weary.

Lord, you enable us to mount up with wings like eagles, to run and not grow weary, to walk and not grow faint. And you are here among us, strengthening your saints that you created by your word, physically, and then by the blood of Christ, spiritually.

We're here because of you. And would you strengthen the saints this morning through this text that you want us to absorb into our hearts for your glory?

We pray this in Christ's name. Amen. Well, good morning, Shoreline. My name is Mike. For those that don't know me, I'm one of the pastors here, and I'm so glad that you've chosen to worship with us this morning.

[5:04] You know, I used to work at Electric Boat, as many of you in this room do. And when I got hired at EB back in 2011, I was hired about the same time as another young engineer, fresh out of college, but the both of us.

This engineer quickly gained a reputation as being an arrogant know-it-all, to, you know, say it softly. One of those engineers that tells the designers and the tradespeople who have been doing their jobs for decades, you know, what to do and how to do it.

And I realized then that there was a reason that engineering had gained this reputation, kind of negative connotations among design and among the tradespeople.

And that engineer, he needed to be reminded of something. You just got here. You just got here.

Now, we see this dynamic all the time with our children, right? At a surprisingly young age, they are adept at offering adults counsel as to what to do and how to do it.

And we tell them, child, you just got here, right? Like, maybe don't be so quick to offer your advice. Maybe watch and learn for a minute or two.

[6:15] Now, of course, the reality is those designers and tradespeople who had been doing things for years were sometimes wrong, actually, right? The 22-year-old arrogant engineer was actually right sometimes.

And we adults, parents especially, we're often wrong. And our two-year-olds actually do correct us sometimes. But friends, the same reality does not exist with the omniscient God of the universe, right?

God is all-knowing. That's what omniscient means. He's all-wise. The one who in the book of Daniel is called the Ancient of Days. Now, I'm riffing off of something a brother prayed at men's prayer yesterday about the Ancient of Days.

You know, in our human pomp and pride, we think that there are some things that God needs to know, right? God, let me just give you this little tip for a second. And he's like, child, I am, I am.

I am the eternally existent Lord of the universe. You're alive because I spoke and it came to be. I'm the Alpha and the Omega, the determiner of all of history.

[7:22] You, you just got here. And the passage for today reminds us of this fact that true wisdom cannot be discovered through human means.

True wisdom can only be found in God, who is the source of all wisdom. So if you haven't already, please turn in your Bibles to 1 Corinthians 2, verse 6.

We're going to go through 3, verse 4. If you don't have a Bible, there are Bibles in the back table bookmarked to the passage. So you're welcome to take one of those as a gift to you. The title of today's sermon is this.

It's true versus worldly wisdom. True versus worldly wisdom. Now, I could just as have easily have titled this sermon spiritual versus worldly wisdom. Now, the reason I chose this is because I want to underscore the fact that spiritual wisdom is true wisdom.

Okay? And that worldly wisdom is false, counterfeit wisdom. Spiritual wisdom meaning divine, of God, from God.

[8:26] Right? And that is true wisdom. And the main point that we're driving at today is this. That Christians live by the true spiritual wisdom. So there's redundancy there.

True, spiritual. Same thing. Christians live by the true spiritual wisdom that God has given us in Christ through the Spirit. And as we unpack the text and build up to this main point, we're going to

see five different aspects of true wisdom.

Okay? So here's where we're going today. It is of God. It's revealed by the Spirit. It's received by the saints. It's repelled by the world. And it's reflected in the church.

So the first thing that we see is that true wisdom is of God. And this is in verses 6 through 9. Paul starts in today's text. Yet among the mature, we do impart wisdom.

Now, Paul had said in chapter 1, verse 17, that Christ sent him to preach the gospel, and not with words of eloquent wisdom, he had said, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.

[9:32] And then in last week's passage, chapter 2, verse 1, Paul said that, And now he says, Yet among the mature, we do impart wisdom.

He wants to ensure the Corinthians are not misunderstanding what he's trying to say. Paul is not saying that when he and Apollos come proclaiming the gospel of Christ crucified, that they are speaking against wisdom.

By no means, right? By no means. They are indeed speaking. They are imparting wisdom to their hearers. If only their hearers would be mature enough to have ears to hear it.

And what does Paul mean by mature? We're going to talk about that at the end of today's text. But, Paul says, this wisdom that they preach is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age.

First sub-point here is the brevity of worldly wisdom. It's not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age who are doomed to pass away, Paul says.

[10:47] Now, Paul is explicitly answering a question that he had left hanging in chapter 1, verse 20. If you look in your Bibles, chapter 1, verse 20, he said, Where is the one who is wise?

Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Where are they? In other words, what is their standing before God? What is their destiny?

Where is their wisdom taking them? They are doomed to pass away, Paul says. Their standing before God is condemned.

Their destiny is eternal punishment in hell. And that's where their wisdom is taking them. Theirs, as we said last week, is not an effective wisdom, right?

Like that of Christ. Christ is the one with perfectly effective wisdom. Their wisdom, worldly wisdom, is completely ineffective. It's completely powerless in matters of eternal significance.

[11:48] It's fleeting. It's momentary. It lasts only for this brief age. And oh, sure, it might secure for them riches and fame in this life.

It might appear as though it is an effective wisdom. But Jesus says, what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? This is the brevity of worldly wisdom.

And this is not all the kind of wisdom that Paul and Apollos come proclaiming. Verse 7, he says, but we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God.

Yes, this is true wisdom. It is, it's divine wisdom. It is wisdom that is bound up with God, derived from God. And that's what Paul means by secret and hidden.

It's not something that mankind can discover on his own. It's only discovered in connection with God because there is no wisdom apart from God.

[12:50] Now, Paul's not saying that there are these like super class of Christians and they're the ones that get this wisdom. No, he's just saying there's, there's Christians and their wisdom is wisdom from God. If you're in God, in Christ, then you have access to this wisdom, which we're going to see as we keep walking forward.

Make time this week to read Proverbs 8, 22 through 31. Proverbs 8. It's this beautiful poem from the perspective of wisdom personified.

And wisdom recounts in verses 29 and 30 that when the Lord marked out the foundations of the earth, Then I was beside him like a master workman, and I was daily his delight, rejoicing before him always.

Divine wisdom is hidden. It's hidden. Secondly, divine wisdom is eternal. Paul says, We impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages.

That poem about wisdom implies this as well. If God is eternal and if wisdom is only of God, then it follows that wisdom is eternal.

[13:56] Now, Paul is specifically talking about here, in the context of where we're at in Corinthians, he's specifically talking about the wisdom

of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the wisdom of the cross of Christ. And Paul is saying that this all-wise plan is something that God had decreed before the ages.

God decided upon. He ordained his plan for the salvation of mankind in Jesus and him crucified before the foundation of the world. And what's crazy about this, church, this means that the cross of Christ was not plan B.

Like, this was God's plan. Now, it baffles our minds, but this was God's plan A for our salvation. Jesus Christ, his son, dying on the cross for our sins.

It baffles the mind, but it proclaims his glory all the more. God had determined to accomplish this in eternity past. This is the wisdom that he had proclaimed.

And Paul says that it is for our glory. Now, this is utterly astounding. This is the God of all glory and all goodness choosing to act in history in such a way as to take those who, as Paul said last week, were foolish, weak, low and despised social nothings.

[15:20] Right? God took those people. Now, worse still, as Paul says in Romans 5, those who were ungodly, sinners, and enemies of God.

So these are people who aren't just, you know, at the bottom rungs of society, these social nothings. They're people who were in active rebellion against a holy God. Totally accountable for their sin.

Guilty as charged. God chose to act in history in such an unthinkable way as to take those people and to pour out his glory and goodness upon them through the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Who are we? Because we're not just talking about the Corinthians here, right? We're talking about us. Who are we to deserve this kind of royal treatment? For our glory.

We don't deserve it. Right? And that's the whole point. God chose to share his glory with us anyway. So we ought to pour out thanks and praise to the Lord.

[16:20] That's why Paul says that we give our lives as a sacrifice of worship to him in light of everything that God has done for us in Christ. To pour out glory upon us. This is the destiny of the saints.

Glory. God's glory. Shared with us. That's worth reflecting on some more this week. Paul then says that 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.

Note that divine wisdom is lofty. By that I mean it is unattainable. It is incomprehensible.

It is unimaginable. As Paul implies here. He's quoting from Isaiah 64 verse 4. And this was a message that we saw reiterated all throughout Isaiah, right?

[17:17] The pagan nations, with the help of their gods and idols, they failed God's challenge over and over again to offer up a worldview that actually coheres with reality.

They couldn't do it, right? And Israel failed to do the same because she had wandered away from the Lord. She also could not bear witness to reality.

And if they couldn't explain the past or the present, how much more were they unable to declare the new things to come? Remember God saying that to Israel?

Behold, I declare to you new things, new things that you have not known. Mankind could never have conceived of God's extraordinary plan to rescue sinners through the cross of Christ.

The ways of Jesus, you know, when he came unto this world, they were so counter to worldly wisdom, right? So incoherent with the power structures of this world that when he, the very son of God, came walking among men, instead of bow down before him, they what?

[18:21] They crucified him on a cross. And in this act, they were unknowingly helping bring about by their own wicked hands the salvation of the Lord.

Like that is just incredible. God using the wicked to accomplish his salvation in Jesus. So yes, glory to his name.

We should pause and give glory to the name of God for doing this. Ascribing praise and honor and majesty and power to him alone. I also want to pause and just let this truth sink in.

For the saints in this room who are grieving or hurting or confused by the circumstances of life. God, as determined from eternity past, as proven by the cross of Christ, is working even now for your glory.

For your glory. For your glory. He has prepared glorious things for those who love him. And he is working all things for good for those that love him.

[19:32] Now it's biblical. It's right to bring our complaints, our laments, our doubts before the Lord. And there in his presence, even in our lament, especially in our lament, let him speak that glorious word over you.

The first thing we see is true wisdom is of God. The second thing, true wisdom is revealed by the spirit. Revealed by the spirit.

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. Now Paul is just applying some basic logic here.

Like it's pretty easy to follow what he's saying. Just as it is, it is only the spirit of a person who knows the mind of that person. Like I don't know what's going on in Caleb's head right now. But his spirit knows what's going on in that head of his.

[20:35] Right? So it is with God, actually. Right? It's only the spirit of God who knows, who understands the mind of God. Now do you remember Paul, I'm sorry.

God's words in Isaiah 55, verse 8 and 9. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are my ways your ways, declares the Lord. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

Because there is no human being who can fathom the depths of the mind of God. They're unsearchable. Right? And what that means is that there is no human being who can access, who can obtain true wisdom.

Because true wisdom is bound up in God. That's the logic of this text here. But as these verses right here say, God has not actually left us to ourselves. Because by his grace, he has revealed these things to us through the Holy Spirit.

What was previously a mystery hidden in God has been revealed to the saints through God's Spirit. And God's Spirit is like, he's like a diver bringing up hidden treasures from the depths.

[21:47] Right? He takes those treasures of God's mind and he presents them to the saints. That's amazing. And at the same time, you know, when I read these verses, I would have expected Paul to say, these things God has revealed to us through the cross of Christ.

Because that's what he's been talking about. And this would be true. And he basically says this in Ephesians 3 verse 6. But that's not actually what he says here. Right? He says, through the Spirit. These things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. Why does he say through the Spirit and not through the Gospel or through the cross? And let's consider the fact that, you know, the events of Christ's life, death, and resurrection, it occurred before the eyes of many people.

Right? Many people. Some who came to believe in Christ. And many who didn't come to believe in Christ. They all saw the same thing before their eyes. Now, this message of the Gospel has been proclaimed for thousands of years to many people.

Some of which have come to believe by God's grace in Jesus. And many of which have not. The Gospel itself was revealed on one level to all the people.

[23:04] Right? To both groups of people. Those who didn't believe. Those who did believe. The Gospel was revealed to them. But on a deeper level. On a more true level. It has been revealed to the saints through the powerful work of the Holy Spirit.

See, the Holy Spirit causes the light bulb of the soul to turn on. We call this the Spirit's work of illumination. He illuminates the soul, the mind. He takes the revelation of the truth.

And he grants to the saints understanding. Acceptance by faith. That's the work of the Holy Spirit in us. And this is why, you know, as we faithfully proclaim the message of the Gospel to the lost.

Which includes our children. We must do so in prayerful dependence on the Spirit. To truly reveal. To illuminate their hearts. Their souls.

Right? So that they actually get the truth that's being spoke to them. And they receive it by faith. True wisdom is of God. True wisdom is revealed by the Spirit.

[24:09] The third thing is, true wisdom is a gift to be received by the saints. It is a gift to be received by the saints. And look at verse 12.

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.

The Spirit of the world. It's probably not, Paul's probably not talking about Satan or about demonic beings. He's probably talking about this worldly wisdom that he's been speaking of.

It's the Spirit of the age. The Spirit of human philosophy. Of human spirituality. Of human definitions of power and success. As opposed to that Spirit.

As opposed to that Spirit. Believers in Christ have been given something entirely different. The Spirit who is from God. So notice then that the gift is primarily the Spirit himself.

[25:08] He is the gift. The Holy Spirit. The third person of the Trinity. Has been given as a gift to the saints. You know, this is the helper.

The Spirit of truth. That Jesus promised his disciples would come to them in his stead. Right? In John chapter 14. In the upper room. The one who would make their hearts a dwelling place for God. Right? Father and Son would come to dwell in the hearts of the saints. Through the Spirit. Jesus said it would actually be to their advantage that he returned to the Father.

So that he would send the helper to be with them forever. After Jesus rose from the dead, he told his disciples. Behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you.

But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high. This promise, this power is the Holy Spirit himself. Who indwells all believers.

[26:12] All of those who have eternal life by faith in Jesus' name. Receive the Holy Spirit. Paul says that it is with the Holy Spirit that we have been sealed. Sealed as a guarantee of our eternal inheritance in heaven.

Now, if you want to learn more about the Holy Spirit, one of the ways you can do that is by pulling up Shoreline's past sermons on John 14, 15 to 31. And John 16, 4 through 15.

Jesus is talking about the Spirit to his disciples. In John 16 specifically, Jesus said that when the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will glorify me, Jesus says, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

And that is one of the glorious roles of the Holy Spirit. The one Paul is highlighting in this text in 1 Corinthians. The Spirit enables believers to understand the things freely given us by God.

So secondly, the gift is Spirit-granted understanding. You know, when you're reading your Bibles, every time, ask the Holy Spirit to help you understand what you're reading.

[27:23] Say, Spirit, you are the teacher. You are the illuminator of truth. I cannot understand these things in my own mind. I need you to understand the truth that is right here in your word.

Pray that prayer. And he will lead you into understanding, into right understanding and heart change at God's word. The gift is the Spirit himself.

The gift is Spirit-granted understanding. And this leads Paul to say next, look at verse 13. And we impart this in words, not taught by human wisdom, but taught by the Spirit.

interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual. So if true wisdom is a gift given by God through his Holy Spirit, then why would Paul and Apollos undermine God's agenda by appealing to human wisdom?

Why would they do that? Why would they take the message of the cross that itself defies human reasoning and that takes the illuminating work of the Spirit to receive and then seek to persuade audiences through worldly methods?

[28:30] He's saying, no, no, no. We reject that. We reject that. Paul and Apollos reject the spirit of the age. They rely instead on the Holy Spirit. And they do this by presenting the true spiritual wisdom of the cross in the language of the Spirit, meaning in the language of God's word revealed to them through the Holy Spirit.

You know, if you're trying to cut through a steel plate, you don't use hand scissors, right? It's not going to work. Now, first of all, if you're using hand scissors, you're kind of mocking that, like, cutting-edge water jet that's over there that can just slice through steel. You're also kind of scorning the people that helped obtain that water jet with money. But secondly, it's just foolishly ineffective. The hand scissors aren't going to work. And that's what they would be doing if they use worldly wisdom in their preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ. And they were not about to do that. They were not going to use worldly wisdom, which is ineffective, in matters so weighty, involving the eternity of souls and involving the glory of God. Now, Christians, you have each been indwelt with the Holy Spirit. If you believe in Jesus Christ, you have God the Spirit in you. He plumbs the depths of God's mind, right?

[29:52] He reveals true wisdom to us. And, you know, Jesus was sacrificed on the cross that we could have this gift by faith. So I just want to ask, are you seeking after this Christ-purchased, Spirit-given wisdom?

It's only through God's Word. It's only through God's Word and through the Holy Spirit that we grow in true wisdom and in true knowledge. Are you pursuing this wisdom through the Word, through the Spirit?

You know, the Corinthians, as becomes evident in the first verses of chapter 3, which we're getting to, they were being formed by false wisdom, right? They were being formed by worldly wisdom and it resulted in stunted spiritual growth.

If you want, Christians, if you want to grow in spiritual maturity, if you want to experience the power of God in your life, if you want to see your sin defeated and holiness increasing, then you need to be formed by spiritual wisdom, by true wisdom, which is from the Lord.

True wisdom is to be received by the saints. Now, fourth, true wisdom is repelled by the world. The natural person, Paul says in verse 14, does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him.

[31:14] And he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. The natural person is as opposed to those who are spiritual in verse 13 and verse 15.

The natural person is the one operating in the spirit of the world, right? According to human wisdom, this person is not a Christian, does not possess the indwelling Holy Spirit who grants that true wisdom.

And to this person who is perishing, is perishing, as Paul said in verse, or chapter 1, verse 18, to this person, the word of the cross is folly. It's folly, right?

All spiritual things, things of the Lord, things of the Spirit, in short, true wisdom, is complete folly to the natural person. Right? If the natural person is the south pole of a magnet, then spiritual things are like another magnet's north pole, right?

They repel each other. And this should strike us as obvious, because if true wisdom is bound up in God, and only the Spirit of God understands the mind of God, then logically, the natural person who does not possess the Spirit of God, they're not going to receive true wisdom, not going to understand it.

[32:26] They're going to repel that wisdom. And so, they do. They reject it as foolish, as nonsense, as offensive to their understanding and perception of reality.

But in contrast, 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 as to instruct him?

But we have the mind of Christ. We have the mind of Christ. Now, I want to start with verse 16, because it helps us understand the more confusing, verse 15.

Paul is quoting, yet again, from Isaiah. This time, Isaiah 40, verse 13. For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him? The answer? No one.

Right? No one. No one understands the thoughts of the Lord so as to instruct him. No one has fathomed the depths of God's mind as to offer him counsel. Remember, he's the ancient of days, and we just got here.

[33:31] But the saints, they possess the very mind of Christ. The mind of Christ through the Holy Spirit.

The Spirit, remember, he plumbs the depths of God, and he presents believers with the riches of true wisdom, and this true wisdom reaches its climax in the gospel of Jesus Christ, in the cross of Christ. You know, that gospel is a message of power through weakness, right? Of salvation through suffering, of glory through shame, of exaltation through humiliation.

This is the wisdom of Christ and him crucified. And it belongs to the saints. It makes no sense to the world, but it's the wisdom that belongs to the saints. The spiritual person, so now looking back at verse 15, the spiritual person, the believer in Christ, possessing the mind of Christ, they see and they operate with the true wisdom of God.

They're able to judge, to examine, to sift out all things, to understand reality and perceive the deeper meaning behind all things. This is true of the believer in Christ who has the mind of Christ.

[34:49] And that means then the believer is not subject to the examination and scrutiny of the world which cannot see reality. If the saints possess the mind of God in Christ which cannot be fathomed by the natural mind, what counsel does the world have to provide the saints?

In matters of spiritual and eternal significance, what counsel does the world have to give believers in Christ? The answer is none. None. Okay, now, what does this mean practically?

What does this mean practically for us? I just want to offer quickly two points of application here.

First, church, our lives should in many ways seem foolish and repelling to the world.

Right? The opposite magnetic pole. If unbelievers are able to look at all the different aspects of our lives and conclude, well, that's normal. Like, that makes sense. Then we're probably subscribing far too much to worldly wisdom.

Right? And far too little to the true wisdom of God. The world ought to see in us and through us the backwards and upside down mind of Christ, which is one of humility and self-giving love and power through weakness.

[36:03] So we ought to consider whether those around us see this kind of wisdom lived out before them, or if they simply see, you know, a spiritualized version of human wisdom.

And you say, Mike, I thought we were supposed to be a magnet attracting the world, not repelling it. To which I say, exactly. And this only comes about by supernatural means.

Right? It defies the world's logic. God is the one who flips the magnetic pole in the heart of an unbeliever and draws that person to faith in Christ. And see, listen, we're not trying to repel the world.

Okay? Don't hear me wrongly. We're not seeking to repel the world. We just are by believing in Christ. Jesus told his disciples to expect to be hated by the world.

Why? Because they hated him. So they're going to hate you as well. But we're not trying to push the world away. We want them to come to faith in Jesus, which is why we need to preach a true gospel and show a true wisdom so that when they come here, they see that on display and actually believe in Jesus and not some worldly wisdom that we offer them.

[37:13] our lives should be repelling to the world. Second, let's consider this. Where do we go when we need counsel? And what kind of counsel do we offer when other believers come to us in need of counsel?

All right, do we first run, do we first run to, or do we first offer worldly wisdom? Or do we first offer true spiritual wisdom? It's a question for us to consider.

You know, you didn't get the promotion at work you've been waiting for. If I were you, I would go straight into your manager's office and tell them how hard you've been working and tell them why your supervisor failed you.

Right, that's worldly wisdom. It sounds good. It appeals to my felt needs. It gives my flesh what it wants. Take two, right? You didn't get the promotion at work you've been waiting for.

I'm really sorry. I know how hard you've been working. You know, God sees your pain. He sees it right now, brother.

[38:16] He sees it right now, sister. He is longing to comfort you in your grief and in your disappointment. So go to him. That's spiritual wisdom. Right? It's truth from God's word brought to bear on a real life situation and Lord willing, spoken in love.

because that's how we're called to speak. It actually might sting a bit though. It might sting a bit. But it's salve for the soul. It's not the scratching of a fleshly itch.

And you know, maybe another right move would actually be to suggest that that person talk to their manager with humility after prayerfully seeking the Lord's will. But let's first offer true spiritual wisdom and then let God lead.

Okay, the fifth and final aspect of true wisdom is this. True wisdom is to be reflected in the church. Reflected in the church. And now Paul gets real.

But I, brothers, could not address you as spiritual people, but as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ. I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for it.

[39:26] And even now you are not ready, for you are still of the flesh. For while there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not of the flesh and behaving only in a human way?

For when one says, I follow Paul, and another, I follow Apollos, are you not being merely human? you know, the King James and New King James translate of the flesh, which we see over and over again here as carnal, meaning worldly, not living in accordance with the mind of Christ, but in accordance with human wisdom.

And this passage has led some to believe that there is another category of Christian, carnal Christians, who possess a saving faith in Jesus, but live lives that look completely like the world, right?

Bearing no spiritual fruit. Now on the surface, this seems to make sense, but I don't actually think that this is the right conclusion to draw from this text.

So Paul's statement is trying to elicit shock. There is a shock factor here. The Corinthian church prided themselves on being, as Paul said in chapter 1, verse 5, enriched in him in all speech and knowledge.

[40:40] The Corinthians considered themselves to be super spiritual, to be overflowing with wisdom, and what Paul has been doing this whole time is redefining what spiritual means, what wisdom actually is.

And he says here he cannot address them as spiritual people. In other words, as Christians. He cannot address them as Christians, but instead as people of the flesh, as non-Christians.

This should be a shock to them. Paul is not adding a third category of carnal Christian. He's affirming that there are two categories. There are those who are in Christ operating with the mind of Christ.

There are those who are not in Christ operating with the world's wisdom. And at present, he's saying, Corinthians, you sure seem to be in the latter category. He is calling them to get off the fence.

That is a dangerous place to be. Get off the fence. You're a walking oxymoron. You profess faith in Christ, but you look like the world. Now listen, Paul does soften his initial statement by referring to the Corinthians as infants in Christ.

[41:47] So Paul does actually believe the Corinthians to be true believers. He's been saying my brothers over and over again. He opened chapter 1 talking about all the riches of Christ that are theirs.

He's saying now they're infants in Christ. They're unable to move past the basics of the faith. And on to more mature teaching. Because they're not ready for it.

And why is that? Because they're still operating with worldly wisdom. They have the mind of Christ, but they're operating out of the world's wisdom. And this shows itself up in this envying one another, this contending with one another, this party lobbying, party grabbing that we've been talking about. But this is evidence of their worldly mindedness. right? It's just like the world. It's natural. This is what people do. Right?

It's not in accordance with the true spiritual wisdom that they've been given. It's not the mind of Christ. So Paul is, he's rebuking the Corinthian church here. Now some might say, man, what a jerk that Paul is, you know?

[42:51] Shouldn't he have been a little bit more compassionate in his words? Now listen, Paul's stern language, it is evidence of his love for the church.

It is evidence of his love. How is that true? Well listen, the Corinthians are treading in dangerous waters. You know, Jesus said in John 15, he's the vine, we're the branches. And what does he do? What does the Father do with the branches that don't bear fruit? Jesus said they get cut off and burned in the fire. Right? The Corinthians are on dangerous ground.

If they aren't bearing any fruit whatsoever, then perhaps that's evidence that they're not actually in Christ. Paul is warning them as an act of love. He wants them to be saved on the day of judgment. And he can't see their hearts. Right? He wants them to make their calling and election sure, as Peter says. Paul's not being harsh. He's speaking the truth in love.

[43:48] Right? He's bringing a needed correction to a wayward people. which is what his Father does. Right? Which is what the Savior does. And this text beckons us all to some introspection.

Right? True wisdom is to be reflected in the church. So the question is, is it being reflected in us? And we ought to consider prayerfully as individuals, as a body, what kind of fruit is being produced in us?

Is it spiritual fruit? Love, joy, peace, patience, all the fruits in Galatians 5? Or is it fleshly fruit, which I'll refer to as thorns, right?

Is the fruit of righteousness springing forth from us, or is it worldly thorns? Those are the things that are springing up. And you know, when we've determined that there are thorns being produced, we ought to stop and ask ourselves, what worldly wisdom then am I subscribing to?

For example, this week, I had moments of feeling anxious and feeling overwhelmed with the responsibilities of life. And that's not a place the Lord wants me to remain, right?

[45:02] He doesn't want me to stay there in that place of anxiety and despair and whatever else comes with that. And I realized I was believing in worldly wisdom.

I was believing that my joy and my satisfaction is actually bound up in my achievements or my performance or what other people think of me. And that's not true.

Right? That's not true. That is the wisdom of this world that I was believing. And I needed to stop and confess that to the Lord. Right? Both the thorn that I saw of anxiety and then the root of idolatry.

Because that's what it was. And then I needed to replace the worldly wisdom with spiritual wisdom. What is actually true? Here's what's true. My joy is bound up in Christ.

It has nothing to do with my performance and my achievements. It has everything to do with His. Right? When I'm operating based on that wisdom then my joy, my satisfaction is no longer based on circumstance, is it?

[46:05] It's rock solid. It is unshakable. So saints, prayerfully go through those steps before the Lord. This takes time. Like you have to do this work before the Lord.

It takes prayer. It takes reflection. Ask yourselves, what thorns are being produced in my life?

Right? These are the symptoms, the evidences, what thorns are being produced. And therefore, what worldly wisdom am I subscribing to?

That's the diagnosis of the heart. It takes time and reflection to do before the Lord. And confess those things to Him. He's not going to beat you over the head. He loves you.

He died for you. He wants you to come before Him honestly and confessing that sin. And He will wrap His loving arms around you and then He will help you by His Spirit to know what the true spiritual wisdom is to offset that false wisdom that you were believing.

That's the medicine, right? That's the medicine of the soul. And that results in fruit, spiritual fruit of the Holy Spirit. And that brings glory to God.

[47:07] And that is a witness to the watching world. Christians live by the true spiritual wisdom that God has given us in Christ through the Spirit. Saints, we have the mind of Christ.

And God intends for that to be reflected in every aspect of our lives, in every aspect, as a testimony of Christ crucified to the world and for His glory.

and astoundingly, it's for our glory as well. That's what Paul says right here in this text.

Astoundingly, it's also for our glory which God has decided is bound up with His.

Glory to His name. Heavenly Father, this text is lofty. for our quality