

## 1 Corinthians 2:6-13

I'm pretty sure that most of us would be pretty **excited** to hear that every family in Trinity Congregation has won a two week vacation in the **Bahamas** with all our expenses **paid in full**. That would really be some **good news**, wouldn't it - especially considering the long and cold **winter** we're having here in Osceola. Basking on a sunny **beach** with a **warm** tropical breeze blowing ever so softly, would be a welcome variation from our daily routines **here**. But unfortunately, in **reality**, we **haven't** received a free vacation to the Bahamas. Nevertheless, I **still** have some **good news** for you. You see, in our text for today, **God** has given us all a message which actually **means** "good news." That message is the **Gospel**, and this morning we will see that **God's Message Is Made Evident To Us**. It's made evident through **revealed truth**, with **inspired words**, and it gives **heavenly wisdom**.

**God's Message Is Made Evident** through revealed truth. But before something can be **revealed**, it must first of all be **hidden**. Our text tells us, "*We speak **God's** wisdom that has been **hidden** in mystery - **before** the ages, **God foreordained** that this wisdom would result in our **glory**.*" What does Paul **mean** when he says that God's wisdom has been **hidden**? It obviously wasn't hidden to **Paul**, otherwise he couldn't have told the **Corinthians** about it. What Paul is talking about here is that God's wisdom is hidden to the **natural man**.

All people know by **nature** that there **is** a God, but unfortunately, natural man **looks** for that God in natural **things**. He turns to the sun, moon, and stars; or to the majestic mountains and volcanoes - thinking that perhaps these **things** are gods. The natural man may think that things which he has **made** with his own **hands** are gods - like the golden calf, or the statues of Baal which we hear about in the Old Testament. Natural man may even go so far as to think that **he himself** is God. These are just **some** of the conclusions which the natural man comes to, through his own **reason** and **observation**. But the **true** God and His **message** for man **can't** be found through **natural** means. So, God **revealed** His wisdom - a wisdom which had been **hidden** to natural man - by sending His **Son**.

But even **this** action by God was **misunderstood**. Through his sinful human nature, man is unable to **recognize** God's wisdom. Paul goes on to say, "*None of the rulers of this world **knew** it. (If they **had** known it, they would not have **crucified** the Lord of glory.)*" The heathen Roman governors and magistrates considered talk about a **Messiah** to be total **foolishness**. After all, who could rule better than **Caesar** - or who could be more powerful than the **Roman legions** who had **shown**

their strength by conquering the **world**? All this talk about a **Messiah** was like waiting for a **storybook** hero, and it was utterly **absurd** as far as the **political** leaders were concerned.

The situation with the Jewish **religious** leaders wasn't much **different** either. God had given them many **promises** concerning the **Savior** who was to come - but these promises were always **veiled** in prophecies and signs. Paul tells us just how obvious it is that they didn't **understand** when he says, "*If they **had known** it, they would not have **crucified** the Lord of glory.*" Jesus of Nazareth, whom they had **crucified**, was the **Messiah** who had been foretold. But the religious leaders at that time were looking for some kind of a **political** Messiah who would lift them out of the bondage of the Roman **Emperor**. They didn't **understand** God's message. And yet there **were** people who **did** understand what was happening. They were totally **aware** of the meaning of God's message. But how could **they** understand something which had been **hidden** even to their religious **leaders**? There was only **one** way - God had **revealed** the meaning of His message to them through His **Holy Spirit**.

God has done **no less** for **us**. He has revealed His **truth** to us through His **Word** and **Sacraments**. In these **Means of Grace** we receive **forgiveness** for all our sins, and **wisdom** which we can't get **anywhere** else. The message of salvation **must** be **revealed** to us. What a marvelous **blessing** God has given to us through that revelation. Even though we try to **hide** our sinful actions from **God**, He **doesn't** try to hide the **remedy** for those sinful actions from **us**. God's message is laid **wide open** for all to see. Through His **Word**, God has put His cards **face up** on the table, to show **everyone** that He is not **bluffing** about the Savior.

However, even the Old Testament **prophets** didn't always understand the **meaning** of the prophecies which God had **spoken** to them. When that happened, Peter tells us what the prophets would **do**. He says, "*The prophets, who prophesied about the grace that has come to you, **searched** and **studied** carefully concerning this salvation, trying to find out **what person** and **what time** the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the **sufferings** of Christ and the **glories** that would follow.*" That means the prophets themselves had to **study** the prophecies which they had written down, in order to find out what they **meant**. They turned to the **written Word** for guidance from the Holy Spirit, for without such guidance there can be no **understanding**. The words of God are **foolishness** to men. Once again our text tells us, "*What no eye has seen and no ear has heard and no human mind has conceived - that is what God has **prepared** for those who love Him. But God **revealed** it to us through his **Spirit**.*"

Again the generosity of God's boundless mercy shows itself in His gift of the **Bible**. Through this written Word, we too are able to learn of all the **promises** and **prophecies** of the **Old** Testament, and even greater than that, we are able to learn of their **fulfillment** in the **New** Testament. Even when so-called biblical scholars try to tell us that the Bible is **not** really the Word of God (at least not **all** of it), we need not despair. We have a **higher** authority, for the Apostle Peter tells us, "*We also have the **completely reliable** prophetic word. You do well to **pay attention** to it, as to a lamp shining in a dark place.*" The Bible is **completely reliable** - it is just as certain for us as the events which the disciples had seen as **eyewitnesses**. And Jesus Himself **further** reassures us of this in His parable about the rich man and poor Lazarus. In that parable the rich man asks Abraham to send Lazarus back among those who are living on earth, in order to warn his five brothers about their upcoming punishment in hell. But Abraham said, "*If they do not listen to **Moses and the Prophets**, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the **dead**.*" In other words, the **most certain** message we can receive is recorded in the words of the **Bible** - words which were verbally **inspired** by God the Holy Spirit.

There couldn't be a **better** agent for carrying out this work than the **Holy Spirit**, because Paul goes on to say, "*The Spirit searches **all things**, even the **depths of God**,*" and He is able to **do** that because He is **also** God. After all, from a human standpoint, who knows more about a person's inner thoughts than the person **himself**? Therefore, who would know more about **God's** thoughts than **God** Himself? The Holy Spirit took those **thoughts**, put them into **words**, and gave them to men to **write down** - as a gift for **all** men of **all** time.

The message which we find throughout the Old Testament, and which Paul preached to the Corinthians, was the same message found in **all** of Paul's preaching. In Colossians 2:2 we hear him say, "*I am doing this so that their hearts may be **encouraged** as they are brought **together** in love, and into **all** the wealth of **assurance** that **understanding** brings, into the knowledge of the **mystery** of God, which is **Christ**.*" The knowledge of **Christ** which Paul wanted His people to have is also the knowledge which **every** Christian pastor wants for his flock. Look around yourself in the world, look around yourself in the congregation, look at **yourself**. There are lots of **knowledgeable** people around, but what **kind** of knowledge do they have? Will their message **comfort** you if you lose everything else? God's message of salvation in **Jesus Christ** will. That's why our pastors and teachers will **always** strive to relay that message of God to us by preaching the **Bible**. **Christ** is the message which God made **evident** with the inspired words of the Bible, and it is through these words that we receive **heavenly** wisdom.

There are many different types of wisdom today. In the past sixty years, mankind has made vast strides in space travel, communication, medicine, agriculture, computer science, and countless other fields of endeavor. But in Paul's day, wisdom was especially concentrated around one group of people - the **Greeks**. Since the Corinthians were a **part** of this culture, we would do well to briefly look at a couple of **examples** of Greek wisdom. There were the **Stoics**, who felt that wisdom revolved around the ability to control **emotions** and **desires**. Feelings like pain or sorrow would be relieved simply by putting them out of mind. Their philosophy could be summed up with these words: Virtue **alone** brings happiness, and virtue is achieved by **knowledge**. Then there were the **Epicureans**. According to them, happiness consisted of **pleasure**, both physical and intellectual. Eat, drink, and be merry was their philosophy - give your mind something interesting to **toy** with, and you will be happy. But neither the Stoics, nor the Epicureans, nor the followers of any of the **other** Greek philosophies gained any **spiritual** benefit from their wisdom. Although they were highly honored among **men**, when those people died and had to face their Maker, their **earthly** wisdom left them with nothing **solid**. The praise of men is **worthless** in the grave.

But how **different** is the **heavenly** wisdom of which Paul speaks. He said, "*I had no intention of knowing **anything** among you except **Jesus Christ**, and him **crucified**.*" By nature, we want to devise our **own** way of salvation with the **earthly wisdom** which we have acquired. But whether we would like to try and **work** our way into heaven, or **rationalize** sin away, we are blessed to have a God who takes these matters into His **own** hands, and who **Makes His Message Evident To Us**. There is only **one way** to make **use** of God's offer. Paul only wanted to know **one thing**, because that one thing was **vital**. Knowing **Jesus Christ** as our Savior from sin is the **only** thing which is of **eternal** importance in our lives. Out of all the wisdom which could be found in his day, Paul had chosen the **best** - because if we have **Jesus**, we have **eternal life**. Amen.