

Hymns: 44, 234, 230, 235(1-4,7)

INI
Pentecost
June 12, 2011
Lay Service

THEME: Students in the Holy Spirit's School

TEXT: 1 Corinthians 2:6-16 ***We speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory, which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him." But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is rightly judged by no one. For "who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct Him?" But we have the mind of Christ.***

In Christ Jesus our Savior, in whom we believe through the working of the Holy Spirit, dear fellow-redeemed:

It's exciting to be near the end of another school year, even for those who like to study, because soon it will be summer and with summer comes the freedom to enjoy vacation and all that is planned. For those who are graduating the end of a school year signals the beginning of something brand new—a new adventure.

Today, are considering the Holy Spirit's school for our hearts. In this school we do not always sit in a classroom to learn from Him. Nor do we ever graduate. We learn through the Holy Spirit's school as we study and meditate upon the life-giving Word of Jesus Christ In that Word and through the working of the Holy Spirit we learn God's wisdom and we learn skills important to faith, salvation, and witnessing to others about our Savior.

This school, though it never dismisses, coincides with everything else we do. Those of you who are familiar with computers know that you can have one program running in the background while you are working on something else. The training of the Holy Spirit runs in the background of every Christian's life. WE are indeed STUDENTS IN THE HOLY SPIRIT'S SCHOOL I. We begin without comprehension II. We discover the hidden III. We possess true wisdom.

I.

The Apostle Paul contrasts kinds of wisdom. He writes, “we speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. But we speak the wisdom of God...” [vv.6-7]

What is the difference between the wisdom of this age and the wisdom of God? The wisdom of this age focuses on this age—this world and the things in it. The wisdom of this age can’t escape things earthly and it dies with those who hold it because once our lives on this earth are over what good does it do to have the knowledge of this age? Once we have died, what good is it to know how to send someone to space? What good is it to have the knowledge to create faster and faster computers? What good does it do to have the knowledge and the knack for building up money and financial portfolios so that you are wealthy and experience all the earthly pleasure? There is wisdom involved with these things but it is limited to here, now, this earth. When time on this earth comes to an end so does all that wisdom and so do all the things that wisdom acquired. As Paul said, “...the rulers of this age coming to nothing.” [v.6]

The wisdom of God is also for this life, but it is for much more. The wisdom of God is receiving the knowledge that Jesus, the Son of God, died for our sins. The wisdom of God is the understanding Jesus’ work changes everything. The wisdom of God directs us far beyond the 70, 80, 90, or 100 years that we might live on this earth. The wisdom of God directs us to eternity—eternal life with God Himself, eternal life that is only attainable through Christ.

Earthly knowledge sometimes tries to pretend that it is godly knowledge. There are people in our world who know the Bible very very well—probably many who know it better than any of us. They know the words, but they don’t believe them. They study the Bible because it includes ancient historic texts, they understand with earthly knowledge all the ins and outs of the Hebrew grammar of the Old Testament and all of the grammatical intricacies of the Greek New Testament. They study and know what role the biblical writings play in the secular history of the world, but when it comes down to knowing the God who is revealed in those words, they still know nothing. Someone who acknowledges that there is a god but does not believe in the true God is no better off than the demons. The apostle James writes: “You believe there is one God, you do well. Even the demons believe and tremble!” (James 2:19)

Paul points out that the earthly rulers of his day did not know the godly wisdom, didn’t know who Jesus was, didn’t understand, “for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory.” [v.8] In their unbelief and lack of comprehension they saw Jesus as a threat to their earthly power—they used earthly wisdom. They saw Jesus as someone who was a trouble-maker, they did not see Him as their blessed Savior. As a result of applying earthly wisdom they hated Jesus and crucified Him. They didn’t know, they didn’t understand, they didn’t comprehend the true wisdom of God; and here is the bitter truth—neither would we know, understand, or comprehend if left to our own thinking, our own logic, our own minds, and hearts. Paul quotes Isaiah and says: “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.” [v.9]

There is no way that any of us would ever understand anything in Scripture, comprehend that God sent Jesus to be our Savior, understand what He has done for us, comprehend the forgiveness of sins, or even in our wildest dreams imagine such a plan of salvation, and yet we

are all here today believing in that truth. It is the miracle of Pentecost—the miracle of the Holy Spirit who takes those who cannot comprehend and instructs them in His school through the Word of God.

The wisdom of God is incomprehensible to us by nature and Paul emphasizes this throughout our text He writes, “the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him.” [v.14]

If you talk to someone who is an unbeliever he may very well ridicule you for what you believe. “What do you mean you believe there was a global flood that destroyed all things?” “What do you mean you believe that God created all this with the power of His Word?” “What do you mean you believe that Jesus of Nazareth could do miracles even raising the dead?” There is so much foolishness in Scripture when viewed through the eyes of human and earthly wisdom, but never forget that earthly wisdom is coming to nothing, it dies in the grave with everyone who takes it there. The wisdom of God is life eternal. That wisdom of God is incomprehensible to us by nature, but the miracle of the Holy Spirit working our hearts brings us to faith.

II.

As the Holy Spirit brings us to faith by working in our hearts, we are able to discover the hidden. Paul writes, “But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory” [v.7]

When Scripture refers to a mystery it is something that is hidden, covered—it is there, but its covered to human sight because of the incomprehension of our human nature. The Holy Spirit comes into our hearts, pulls back the cover, and reveals all that is in God’s Word. We hear from the account of the first Pentecost that when the disciples were speaking in the different languages to the people who were gathered, they spoke the “wonderful works of God” (Acts 2:11). Through the blessing of the Holy Spirit, the disciples pulled back the cover for all those who gathered so they could see, understand, and through the working of the Holy Spirit comprehend what God had accomplished for them.

Paul continues, “God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. These things we also speak, not in words which man’s wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.[vv.10,12-13]

We discover the hidden things because the Holy Spirit enlightens our eyes to see them. There are many gifts of the Holy Spirit which we may take for granted because we have become so used to them. For example: In his letter to the Philippians, the Apostle Paul speaks of “the peace of God which surpasses all understanding” (Philippians 4:7). It is a peace which comes to troubled consciences knowing that their sins are forgiven. It is a peace that comes to sinners living in a troubled world because they know that Jesus their Savior has all power in Heaven

and on earth. That peace is something we have and enjoy, but it is also a gift given to you by the Holy Spirit when He pulled back the cover to show you what is in Scripture. Your peace comes from knowing that God did really redeem you through Christ, that you really do have a Lord who controls all things, and that when you die you really will go to heaven. This peace is something that no unbeliever can understand. It passes human comprehension because it can only be understood and comprehended through the work of the Holy Spirit as He works in our hearts through the Gospel.

The confidence that you have as a child of God is a gift of the Holy Spirit. Being able to read through Scripture and apply certain truths to your life, to read through a section of Scripture and be moved to understand: "That's me! God is talking about me. God Himself is talking to me personally to address this in my life through His Word!" That understanding is also enlightenment from the Holy Spirit. Someone else may read the exact same section of Scripture and not understand at all that God is speaking to him through that Word.

These things that are so much a part of our lives—our faith life and our Christian life—are ours because the Holy Spirit has pulled back the covers to show us the hidden. The Holy Spirit continues to pour out His gifts according to our need and for our blessing.

On the first Pentecost the disciples were given the remarkable gift of speaking in languages they had never known. This gift was so that in one day they could convey the truth of God's Word to many people from many lands who were gathered in Jerusalem. Those people then returned home with the Gospel in their minds and hearts and were able to share it with others at home. This resulted in an explosive and quick spread of the Gospel. The gift of languages was important at that time for God's purpose. Now that the times are different and the circumstances are different, the gifts also differ. However, the Holy Spirit still tailors gifts for us today according to our circumstances and how He desires to use us. The Holy Spirit will give us whatever is necessary for us to be active servants of the Word, carrying the Gospel to others so that the Holy Spirit will work in their hearts and lead them to discover the hidden.

III.

Having been so blessed by the working and miracle of the Holy Spirit, we possess true wisdom. Paul concludes by saying, "...we have the mind of Christ." [v.16] Paul declares that through the working of the Holy Spirit we have a mind and will and intention that coincides with Christ and His will. We still have our sinful flesh which we battle daily, but the New Man which the Holy Spirit has created in us, shares the mind of Christ. Our plans, our intentions, our dreams and our desires are connected to our Savior and depend upon Him. We have that true wisdom that understands the salvation which God has provided and believes it! We have the true wisdom that equips us to face the things of this life in connection with Christ—trusting in his power and grace and wisdom. We have the true wisdom that first goes to God in prayer when we are facing something in our lives and is confident that He will guide and lead us in a course that is right and according to His will for our lives.

We need the Holy Spirit, and thanks be to God that we have Him! We have been given true wisdom that lasts beyond this lifetime and into eternity. We have the true wisdom for our

salvation by the miracle and working of the Holy Spirit. That wisdom and the gifts which the Holy Spirit supplies are the way by which our Savior keeps us in the faith and uses us in the work of His kingdom. Thanks be to God for sending us the Paraclete—the Helper—who calls us to His side, leads us to discover the hidden, and blesses us in miraculous ways. Amen.