

The Precious Gift Which God The Holy Spirit Wishes To Bestow On All People Without Distinction.

Text: 1 Cor 2:6-16

1) What is this precious gift?

Suggested Hymns:

2) How is this precious gift imparted?

134, 127, 125, 294, 132

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.

The text for our sermon today is 1 Corinthians 2:6-16, ⁶ *However, 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.* ⁷ *But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory,* ⁸ *which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.*

⁹ *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."* ¹⁰ *But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.* ¹¹ *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.*

¹² *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.* ¹³ *These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.*

¹⁴ *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.* ¹⁵ *But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is rightly judged by no one.* ¹⁶ *For "who has known the mind of the LORD that he may instruct Him?" But we have the mind of Christ. (NKJV)*

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,

Today we are observing what, in name at least, is the oldest festival celebrated in the Church of Christ — Pentecost. More than three thousand years ago the Israelites celebrated this festival at the foot of Mount Sinai. It pleased God to select this very day for the sending of His Holy Spirit to the disciples of Jesus after His ascension into heaven.

The word Pentecost means the fiftieth day; for it was the fiftieth day after the Passover that the Law was given from Mount Sinai, and it was the fiftieth day after the resurrection of Jesus from the dead that the Holy Spirit, the promised Comforter, was poured out upon the apostles at Jerusalem.

It is true, the Holy Spirit was given to God's people even before the outpouring upon the apostles at Jerusalem. However, on that first Pentecost of the New Testament the Holy Spirit was poured out in a greater measure and with more gifts and increased power for the blessings of the New Testament.

On that day there was such a brilliant manifestation of the Holy Spirit's powers and blessings that people today are astonished when they read of it. How many who read or hear of this outpouring of the Holy Spirit have wished and even prayed for another such outpouring!

But it is just as idle to wish for the miracle of Pentecost to be repeated as to wish that the miracle of Christmas or of Good Friday or Easter to be repeated.

What we all ought to do is to rejoice in the gift which God gives us today, to accept it by true faith, and to exercise diligently the powers which God bestows upon us continually through His Holy Spirit.

In our text God Himself calls attention to *The Precious Gift which God the Holy Spirit Wishes to Bestow on All People without Distinction*. May the Lord bless our meditation.

1. What Is This Precious Gift?

In our text St. Paul calls attention to the fact that the gift which the Holy Spirit wishes to bestow upon us is not the wisdom of this world. We read in verse 6, *yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing*

When Paul states this, he is not casting any blame on the learning of his day. Nor, for that matter, do we ever make light of genuine learning. We thank God

for the discoveries and achievements of astronomy, biology, chemistry, physics, medicine, mechanics, and other sciences and arts.

And yet, the true wisdom of which Paul speaks is not of this earth. It has not been, nor can it be, spun out of the mind of man. This true wisdom is not of this world.

Likewise it cannot come from “*rulers of this age*,” from such men as Roman governors, Jewish Sanhedrists, politicians, or philosophers. Paul says NO. And he is rather emphatic in his statement. He says in verse 8, *none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.*

The rulers were unable to recognise the true wisdom, even when it came to them in bodily form. They crucified the Lord of Glory. It was shameful enough that they crucified an innocent man, a good man, who all his life went about doing good; but think of it, they crucified the Lord of Glory; they crucified Him who is Wisdom incarnate. What abysmal ignorance! What daring impiety! Surely true wisdom is not of the rulers of this world.

Rather true wisdom is wisdom from God. It is supernatural. *But we speak the wisdom of God.* We speak it “*in a mystery.*” Mystery, in the New Testament use of the word, does not mean obscure teaching, but it means a truth once hidden, but now revealed.¹ It is furthermore called “*the hidden wisdom,*” hidden from the wise and prudent, but revealed to babes. We read in Matthew 11:25, ²⁵ *At that time Jesus answered and said, “I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and have revealed them to babes.*

It was hidden away in the eternal counsel and foreknowledge of God. It was “*ordained before the ages,*” before the beginning of time. This wisdom is meant for “*those who are mature.*” And lastly, this wisdom is “*for our glory,*” “*who called us to His eternal glory.*”²

What, then, is this true wisdom? It is God’s plan of salvation.

Salvation is the one thing in which every human being is interested. Why is it that there are so many religions scattered throughout world and over the years?

It is because man feels a need and gropes about for an object that will satisfy this need.

Man, also the heathen, feels the accusations of his conscience. Paul refers to this when he speaks of the Gentiles who do not have the Law (ie Ten Commandments) and mentions that their conscience accuses them. The most important question which every person has to face is, *What is my relationship to my Creator? Am I saved?*

The wisdom of the world answers: “If you want to be saved, make a sacrifice to the Deity.” The wisdom of heaven answers: “*God has already made a sacrifice for you. He has given His only-begotten Son to die for you.*”

The wisdom of man says: “You are saved by character.” The wisdom of God says: “*You are saved by grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.*”

The religions of the world speak of man’s quest after God. The religion of heaven speaks of God’s quest after man. This is true wisdom; for it bestows salvation; it glorifies God and rescues man.

This wisdom is very precious indeed! It satisfies both head and heart. It illuminates the mystery of our life. When we consider the immensity of the universe, the infinity of space, the endless succession of seasons, the fall and rise of generations, the many paradoxes and inconsistencies of life, a sense of nameless dread makes us numb. Who are we? Where do we fit in? We feel like so many ants in the gleam of a million suns. — Then there is the question of sin, of sorrow, and of the grave. What is it all about anyway?

Where is the unifying principle which gives purpose and direction to life? It certainly won’t do to say, “*I am going to forget all about it. I shall give it no further consideration.*” No; man is born under the star of interrogation. He cannot get away from the fact that he is, that he is here. You may doubt everything else, but you cannot doubt that you doubt. And if you are capable of doubt, it shows that you are, you exist.

What are you here for? Where have you come from? What ought you to do? What may you know? Where are you going? These are the problems that clamour for solution. Summed up in one sentence, the great problem is, “*Where do you belong?*”

Out of the mists rises the cross. *“God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them.”*³ Man formed that cross by putting his will in opposition with God’s will; and because he crossed the will of God, Jesus hung upon the cross and effected reconciliation.

Thus the cross tells us that man, who is made by God and for God, shall find rest in God.⁴ This is the only knowledge that rises to the height of wisdom. This wisdom is to be found in the Lord of Glory, whom the princes of this world crucified. That is the gift of Pentecost, of the Holy Spirit.

We must be sure that we have received this gift, hence we shall ascertain in the second place how this wisdom is imparted.

2. How Is This Precious Gift Imparted?

This precious gift is not imparted by nature. Our text says, *“But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him.”* When Paul speaks of the “natural man,” he has in mind all people irrespective of their social status. And so long as they are un-spiritual, unregenerated, they will turn from true wisdom with an air of haughtiness or disgust.

Christianity and the cross are synonymous. The cross is the center and pivot, the Gibraltar, of the faith. If the cross means anything, it means everything. And to the “natural man” the cross is “foolishness.” It is scandalous. The natural man is an enemy of Christ, and of the Cross of Christ.⁵

The cross of Christ appears to the natural man as folly; for he says:—

- 1) “It is not complimentary to God. ‘Any God except a God who hangs upon a cross.’”
- 2) “It questions the justice of God. Why should an innocent man be made to suffer for the guilty?”
- 3) “The doctrine of the cross leads to wickedness. If a person can be saved by a look, then why bother about leading an upright, moral life?”
- 4) “The cross lowers the value man. It speaks to him of guilt, of weakness, of helplessness. Man should be sufficient to himself, independent, able to stand on his own two feet, face the results of his life as a man, and not look around for a scapegoat to bear his responsibilities.

When Mr. Greatsoul hears that God has come to save him, taking upon himself, in the person of His Son, the responsibility of his sin, Mr. Greatsoul meets the proposition with a towering independence, saying, *'This is my business; I will attend to it.'* "The modern mind, equipped with all the resources of science and art and committed to self-salvation, will have none of the cross because the acceptance of the cross begins in the confessional prayer, *'God be merciful to me, a sinner.'*"

So, then, *"the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him.*

How, then, is the true wisdom imparted, *"the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory, ^s which none of the rulers of this age knew?* How can man receive *"The things which God has prepared for those who love Him, which Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man?*

The answer is in verse 10 of our text. *God has revealed them to us through His Spirit.*

This true wisdom is so high that it must proceed from the Eternal Mind; it must be Spirit-given. *"The Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God."* He "searches," that means, He knows. The Holy Spirit is the greatest Teacher because He is God.

This is explained by an analogy, *For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him?* No one else can know what is in a person. The depths of a man's being and thoughts do not lie open to the eyes of others. Others cannot discern his hidden motive, and his secret desire. They see only what is on the outside. But the spirit of man sees what is within himself.

Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. No man can probe the depths and discover the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God. His judgments are unsearchable and His ways past finding out. But to the Holy Spirit the depths of God are clear; for the Holy Spirit is God. Even as the spirit of man and man are identical, so the Spirit of God and God are one. The Spirit alone therefore can fully know and alone is able fully to reveal.

The Holy Spirit teaches us to know the things of God. Verse 12 reads, ¹² *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.*

The Holy Spirit takes away our spiritual blindness and causes us to see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. He unveils the supernal mystery. He guides us into all truth. The person who has responded to the operations of the Holy Spirit suddenly loses his hostility to the cross; he sheds his worldly-mindedness; he ceases to be an enemy of God and a child of wrath.

He realises and believes two sets of three things. Firstly, that sin condemns, the law is uncompromising, and that God is estranged from man. Secondly, that in Christ sin has been cancelled, the demands of the Law fulfilled, and that God and man are now at peace.

His understanding is illuminated, and in the light of imparted wisdom he sees light. The man is born again. He was born once according to the flesh, but now he is born now according to the Spirit.

The Holy Spirit furthermore teaches us to speak the things of God. ¹³ *These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.*

The Holy Spirit taught Paul. Paul proclaimed the glad tidings of great joy *"not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches."* He spoke and wrote as the Holy Spirit gave him utterance. Not only his thoughts, but also his words were inspired by the Holy Spirit, *comparing spiritual things with spiritual.* Paul fitted and clothed spiritual truth with Spirit-given words, words suggested by the Holy Spirit, and so interpreted spiritual things to spiritual people. And all this for us that we might be made partakers of this heavenly wisdom.

The Holy Spirit also teaches us. He does so through the medium of the Word. Oh, that we would more zealously read our Bibles. The hidden wisdom of God has been revealed to us, first in the Word Incarnate - Jesus Christ, and then in the written Word.

The words of Scripture are truth, and they are life. We should study them, and if we do so prayerfully, the Holy Spirit will enlighten us, lead us into all

truth, and give us that wisdom of which there is none higher. Each time that we hear these words, the Holy Spirit offers us the richest gifts of heavenly-wisdom.

Let us conclude with the words of the hymnist,⁶

Come, gracious Spirit, heavenly dove,
With light and comfort from above;
Be Thou our guardian, Thou our guide,
O'er every thought and step preside.

Lead us to heaven, that we may share
Fullness of joy for ever there;
Lead us to God, our final rest,
To be with Him for ever blest. Amen

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep our hearts and minds, in Christ Jesus. Amen.

¹ Rom. 16:25; Eph. 3:4. 9; Col. 1:26; 1 Tim. 3:16.

² 1 Peter 5:10

³ 2 Corinthians 5:19

⁴ Matt. 11:28

⁵ Phil. 3:18

⁶ Hymn 125 v 1 & 4