

MINISTRY BY MAIL
Lutheran Conference of Confessional Fellowship
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Sexagesima Sunday, February 4, 2024

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(Hymns found in The Lutheran Hymnal, CPH, 1941)

Hymns: 294, 366:5, 433, 355, 48.

Lessons: Jeremiah 9:23–24, 1 Corinthians 1:18-2:5, Matthew 13:53-58.

Sermon Text: 1 Corinthians 2:6-13.

Sermon by Pastor Robert Mehlretter

In the name of Jesus Christ, Dear Fellow Redeemed,

Aren't there countless sources of what is supposed to be wisdom today? You can learn from your neighbor, from your co-worker, from your friends and acquaintances. You can learn from books and magazines and newspapers. You can learn from all sorts of what are called "social media": the internet, emails, Facebook, X (formerly called Twitter), TikTok and many, many other sources that people use to try to communicate.

But we really need to ask What is true wisdom? Where does it come from?

The Apostle Paul wrote in the words leading up to our sermon text *"When I came to you, brothers, I did not come with eloquence or superior wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. . . . My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power."* (1 Corinthians 2:1,4,5, NIV84)

The Apostle Paul was a well-educated man, but he did not trust in his learning when he preached, but rather he trusted in God's wisdom. Paul could have spoken very convincingly with man's wisdom, but God led him not to do this.

In our Epistle lesson today, you heard him clearly say that he did not bring wisdom from men. He brought, he taught, he proclaimed

WISDOM FROM THE HOLY SPIRIT

- 1. Paul's wisdom plainly comes from God.**
- 2. That wisdom is available to us today, and**
- 3. That wisdom is found in God's Holy Word.**

The Apostle Paul is writing by the inspiration of God. He speaks what he calls *"a message of wisdom"*.

Today, in our world, many, many people claim to speak a message of wisdom. But what kind of wisdom do men offer?

Well, if we look at the meaning of the English word "wisdom" we find that wisdom includes the ability to discern or judge what is true and right and lasting. It is enlightenment. It includes understanding, common sense, and insight. It is based on accumulated knowledge, and enlightenment.

When we dig a little deeper into the word "wisdom", we find that the Greek word used in Scripture also means and refers to a supreme intelligence, a broad and full intelligence.

Especially in the Apostle Paul's epistles, it means a knowledge of the divine plan, previously hidden, of providing salvation for men by the suffering, death and resurrection of Christ.

Paul's wisdom did not come from any human source, but it came from God. He had learned and knew the Old Testament Scriptures, and God called him to proclaim Jesus Christ as he is found in the Old Testament Scriptures and as Jesus lived his life and died to redeem mankind from sin and all its terrible consequences.

The Word of God itself assures us that *"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."* (2 Timothy 3:16–17, NIV84)

God also inspired Paul to write ten letters, ten epistles to Christians which are part of the verbally inspired New Testament further explaining and teaching about Jesus Christ.

Paul says, ***“We speak of God’s secret wisdom, a wisdom that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began.”*** The Gospel of Christ is divine wisdom. It comes from the Lord, who before creation ordained that this Gospel of Christ should be proclaimed to save sinners and finally result in the glorification of all who believe in Jesus as their Savior. Now, in our lifetime, we who know the truth of salvation in Christ can rejoice in being redeemed. In heaven we shall enjoy the bliss of eternal life forever.

That is the wisdom you have been given, as you have learned the Word of God and especially learned what Jesus Christ did for you.

The world places a great premium and honor on human wisdom. That wisdom is often presented by people who have a great many certificates, credentials, diplomas, college degrees.

It is true that we can learn many things from men. We learn how to do things, how to do our jobs, how things work in in the world. We can learn things of the world.

But Paul stresses here that he is speaking this message, which is from God, ***“among the mature.”*** It is ***“not the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing.”***

The Gospel of Christ is real wisdom, ***“among the mature,”*** Paul says, referring to his hearers who by God’s grace and the Holy Spirit’s work accepted the Gospel of Christ. Believers in Christ believe and understand the Gospel to be true wisdom from the Lord. They appreciate the Gospel and value it highly. Let other people denounce the Gospel as foolishness. Let them say that it is outdated and old-fashioned. The fact is that this Gospel of Christ is very much up-to-date and is the only wisdom which can save us from our sins and bring us to heaven. Worldly wisdom cannot do this. Paul said he did not preach ***“the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing.”*** The ***“rulers of this age”*** are the leaders, the unbelieving teachers, the philosophers and men of influence in the world.

Sadly, many teachers in visible churches do not proclaim and teach the wisdom that comes from God. As long as they oppose Jesus Christ, their wisdom, their influence and their achievements, will all pass away. Finally it will amount to nothing. They themselves cannot be saved by it, nor can they save anyone else. But we as believers in Christ confess with Paul, ***“I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes.”*** (Romans 1:16, NIV 84)

Paul is speaking of what he calls ***“God’s secret wisdom, a wisdom that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began.”*** This is a wisdom which comes only from God.

This is a wisdom which, if the rulers of the world had understood it, ***“they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.”***

“God has revealed it to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man’s spirit within him? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us.”

Just as you are the only one who really knows what is going on in your mind, so in the same way no one knows what is going on in the mind of God except God himself, including the person of the Holy Spirit. And in his Word, the Sacred Scriptures, God reveals to mankind exactly what he wants us to know.

The Holy Spirit, the third person of the Holy Trinity, is the one who reveals spiritual truths to man. In the days of the apostles the Holy Spirit worked directly with them to make known what they were to speak and do and write down. After Peter and John were released from prison where they had been put because they insisted on preaching the Gospel, they reported back to the believers, and they all prayed to the Lord for courage to speak God’s Word with boldness. Then Scripture says ***“They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly,”*** (Acts 4:31, NIV 84) When we read about Paul’s missionary journeys, we learn that it was the Holy Spirit who directed Paul and his companions to go where they did and to speak what they did, proclaiming the truth about Jesus.

Paul, quoting the prophet Isaiah, tells us ***“No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him – but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit.”***

So what has God prepared for you? Eternal life. How is it yours? By believing. Scripture plainly tells us **“Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.”** (Mark 16:16, NIV84)

The Prophet Jeremiah tells us, as you heard in our Old Testament lesson, **“This is what the Lord says: ‘Let not the wise man boast of his wisdom or the strong man boast of his strength or the rich man boast of his riches, but let him who boasts boast about this: that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight,’ declares the Lord.”** (Jeremiah 9:23–24, NIV84)

If we who have learned and are continuing to learn the wisdom of God are going to boast about anything, let us boast in what God has done for us.

And you reading these words are among those few in the world who at this very moment have opportunity to hear and learn that great wisdom which comes from God.

Think of the many gifts with which the Holy Ghost has enlightened you and given you real wisdom. They include the knowledge that Jesus Christ is my Lord and Savior. The assurance of faith that I am justified before God through Christ. Peace with God. The hope of heaven. The witness that I am a child of God. Comfort in all tribulation. Confidence to pray, and all blessedness which Jesus Christ, my Lord, obtained for me.

All these gifts come to us through the Wisdom of God who gave us his Holy Word.

When we read Paul’s words **“The message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God,”** (1 Corinthians 1:18, NIV 84) we see that the wisdom of God gives us salvation! Some people consider the preaching of Christ Crucified foolishness and they reject it. On the other hand, by the grace of God, some people believe the Gospel of Christ and are willing to share this message with others, are willing to support the work of spreading this message, and are even willing to sacrifice their lives for this work.

This ought to give us great confidence in the Bible. It is the very word of God. It not only teaches us the exact words God wanted recorded, but in the Gospel of Christ Crucified we have the power of God working in our hearts. Through this powerful Word the Holy Spirit creates faith in Jesus in our hearts. He strengthens that faith when we read and hear the Word. The Word of God also teaches us how we may bring forth fruits of faith and live a sanctified life. And finally, the Holy Spirit keeps us in the true faith unto life everlasting. The Holy Spirit through the Gospel of Christ does all this.

So we pray that the Wisdom that comes from God would come into our lives every day. With the hymn writer we pray:

*“Come, oh, come, Thou quick’ning Spirit,
God from all eternity!
May Thy power never fail us; Dwell within us constantly.
Then shall truth and life and light Banish all the gloom of night.” Amen.*
(The Lutheran Hymnal, 226:1)