

Session 3

October 27, 2019

GOD'S WILL AND THE HOLY SPIRIT

1 Corinthians 2:6-16

God's Word contains truth. But the Holy Spirit *imparts* truth. The Bible, read simply as a book, remains only that: a book. When Philip approached the Ethiopian official in Acts 8, the man was reading from Isaiah 53. When Philip asked if he understood what he was reading, the man answered, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" (Acts 8:31). Thankfully, we have a guide to help us understand the mysteries of God: His Holy Spirit.

God's wisdom is different (vv. 6-8). Paul already pointed out to the church at Corinth that his teaching and preaching lacked the "brilliance of speech" and "wisdom" they must have expected (see vv. 2, 4, and 5). What they expected from the apostle was an educated eloquence that the philosophers of the day were known for. Paul's response? "You are hearing wisdom...but it's God's wisdom, not man's." Three distinct differences are mentioned in verse 6. First, unlike man's wisdom, the wisdom of the gospel is for the "mature." In other words, it makes sense to those who are spiritually attuned and progressing in their walk with Christ. Second, it's an eternal, unchanging truth, unlike the flimsy philosophies they were used to hearing. Third, God's truth is not like the political or military slogans that were thrown about by rulers to influence their people. Such sayings "come to nothing;" they produced no lasting results. No, God's wisdom is different. The construction of verse 7 is difficult, but certain points are clear: God's wisdom, though eternal, had been thus far hidden. The grace displayed in Christ's substitutionary death was revealed in small preparatory lessons bound up in sacrifices and laws. But: "when the fullness of time had come, "God sent forth his Son" (see Gal. 4:4-5; Heb. 1:1-3). In verse 8, Paul proves his point: the religious rulers of this world never understood the nature of the gospel of grace; for if they had, they would have rejoiced at Christ's coming, rather than crucifying Him.

God's wisdom is divine (vv. 9-11). Verse 9 is a loosely worded quote of Isaiah 64:4. But while the words are not exact, the meaning is clearly preserved. The human eye has never been able to see what God is up to; the human ear has never been able to understand it; the human intellect has never been able to imagine it. Such is the mystery of our God! That which He has in store for His children far exceeds the limits of mere human comprehension. Does this principle apply to heaven? Certainly! But it applies to all that God does. In the immediate context of this passage, it applies to the wisdom of the Divine. Yet God has given us a glimpse of His inner workings through the Holy Spirit (v. 10). This too, demonstrates God's wisdom. The Spirit of God is Himself God, so who better to reveal God's mysteries? Verse 11 illustrates it in human terms. No one knows a person better than the person himself. Hence, no one knows the person of God any better than the Spirit of God.

God's wisdom is discerned (vv. 12-16). The overarching principle of this section is simply this: only spiritual people can perceive spiritual truth. I used to get so frustrated when lost people didn't grasp the simplest of spiritual teaching. But I eventually came to understand this concept so clearly stated in verse 14. And here Paul explains why. First, God designed it that way. Spiritual truth is aimed at believers, so that they can discern what God has "freely given" to them (v. 12). Second, God's Holy Spirit must be present in us to impart the truth that God gives to us

(see also John 14:16, 17, 26, et al.). Lost people, devoid of God's Spirit, don't *welcome* spiritual truth. In fact, they think *it is foolishness*. In reality, the lost couldn't understand spiritual truth if they wanted to! Like an AM radio trying to pick up FM signals, they simply lack the equipment necessary to do so: in this case, God's Holy Spirit. But believers *do* have the Holy Spirit (v. 15). As a result, we *can* discern the spiritual truth God gives and owe no lost man an explanation or justification.