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## Spiritual Insight

### 1. Intro

- Last year a picture of this dress went viral as people across the world debated the colour of the dress
  - Was it blue and black or was it white and gold?
- Sometimes we just can't see the reality of what is before us
- What about this?
  - What do you see?
  - Optical illusions x 3
- Sometimes when we see these things ... we need someone to point them out to us
- On our own ... we can't see it > we need it to be revealed to us
- Same is true when it comes so to the message of Christianity and the cross
- We need it to be revealed to us
  - On our own ... none of us can see it > we're all blind
  - Unless it's revealed we just won't get it and will continue to think it's foolish

### 2. Context

- So far in his letter, Paul has been addressing this issue of division and disunity amount the Corinthian Christians who were boasting in their favourite preacher or house church leader
- And last week in Ch 1:18-2:5 Paul said ...
  - The power is not in the preacher ... the power is in what is preached
  - It's not the wisdom, rhetoric and passion of the preacher that matters ... what matters is that people hear the good news about Christ and him crucified
  - I know the world thinks the message of the cross is foolish ... but it is in actual fact the wisdom and strength of God ... because the message of the cross is able to do what man cannot do ... bring forgiveness of sin and eternal life for those who believe in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour
- Having explained all that ... Paul now goes on to explain WHY the world finds the gospel foolish
- How is that the intelligent and wise of the world see the cross is so moronic ... yet others will see it is the power to save and the wisdom of God

- And Paul's big idea in these verses is because you need spiritual insight
- If you want to be a healthy Christian ... you must have spiritual insight ... you need God's wisdom needs to be revealed to you

### 3. The wisdom of God revealed in history (v6-8)

- First thing Paul says is the wisdom of God has been revealed in history
- Previously the wisdom of God had been hidden ... but now it's been made known
- What's Paul talking about here?
  - Is he saying that Paul and his band of merry men are super spiritual gurus who have some secret knowledge that no-else knows?
  - Or that he has a direct line to heaven and God's giving him special instructions that only he knows?
- No ...
  - The secret message he's talking about is the same message he was talking about in 1:18-2:5 ... which is what Paul always talks about
  - True wisdom / secret wisdom is the message of gospel
    - It's the message of the cross and Christ crucified for the forgiveness of sins
- Reason Paul says it was secret and hidden but now revealed is because God's plan to
  - to save his ppl
    - atone for sin
    - provide forgiveness, and redemption, and righteousness
  - all this was revealed in Christ and the cross
- Sure, God had made promises he would do this in the OT
  - But HOW he would do it was not clear > it was hidden
  - He had made it known he would send a Messiah / a Christ
  - But it wasn't known the Christ would be crucified and die for sin the sins of the world
- **Illustration - photo out of focus**
  - Like a photo out of focus > see the picture but not clearly
  - Focus the lens and you see clearly
- Paul is saying
  - God's plan wasn't obvious to us > it was hidden / secret

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- But now that Christ has come, died on the cross, risen from the grave, and ascended to glory ... we see clearly now
  - God's plan is no longer hidden and a secret ... it's been fully revealed
  
  - And the point Paul goes on to make in v8-9 is that despite God revealing his cosmic plan for all the world to see ... there continues to be those who reject it
  - Even with
    - the coming of Christ
    - the miracles he performed that revealed his power and authority
    - the OT scriptures pointing to his coming
      - there remains those who fail to get it
  
  - And it's not that they didn't cognitively grasp the message
    - The issue was they refused to accept that message personally
  - They've heard the message ... but they don't get it
    - They comprehend it ... but they don't believe it
  
  - **Application**
  - The worldly wisdom you read and hear of day by day from the rulers of this age may sound impressive and sophisticated and life changing
  - But it is limited ... it has a use by date ... it will come to an end
  - Sometimes we see human wisdom come to an end in our own life time
    - President Trump swept to power in US on the back of the slogan – 'Make American Great Again'
      - Many saw wisdom in that and voted him into power
      - It seems many are now recognising that wasn't so wise after all
    - Political parties and ideals are similar
      - They come and go
      - Communism ... swept the world in C20<sup>th</sup> ... it's now all but disappeared
      - Then there's the various political parties that come and go
        - Smokers Rights Party, Animal Justice Party, Pirate Party ... and list goes on
        - They come and go every election
  
  - At a more sophisticated level there are the philosophers of the world
    - Descartes C17<sup>th</sup> > Kant C18<sup>th</sup> > Nietzsche C19<sup>th</sup> > Peter Singer C20<sup>th</sup> > Jordan Peterson > C21<sup>st</sup>
      - Their ideas are read and espoused and adopted for a time

- Then a new philosopher comes along ... seen to be wiser ... who's ideas are more relevant ... who becomes the wisdom for a time
- Only to be forgotten when the next one comes along
- But God's wisdom is eternal
  - From the beginning of time God had planned to save people from judgment and hell by sending his son into the world, to go to the cross, and die for their sin so that those who believe would be destined for glory
- No politician, philosopher, lecturer, guru, leader or friend has the sort of wisdom that will lead you to the glory of eternal life
  - But God's wisdom, made clear
    - in the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ on that first Christmas day
    - then focused on the cross of the first Easter ... does
- And because God is eternal ... his wisdom and his plans are eternal
- And therefore, his wisdom for our glory ... is the one we need to listen to

#### 4. The wisdom of God revealed by the Spirit (10-13)

- Now as v8-9 highlight for us ... the problem with this eternal, Godly wisdom is ... no one can see it!
- And Paul has this quote in v9 to back up his point
- He says
  - *"No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him"—*
- But in v10 Paul says ... "I know"
- And the reason Paul and the apostles know this message of wisdom is because it's been revealed to them by the Holy Spirit
- Here is the trinity at work
  - God the Father, revealing the truth about God the Son, through God the HS
- This intimate unity of the F, S & HS is the reason we are able see and understand the wisdom of the cross and God's eternal plan for salvation
- Because only the Spirit knows the heart of the Father and of the Son
- We cannot know
  - the heart God
  - the essence of God
  - the plans and purposes of God of our own accord
    - Only the Spirit knows that and can reveal that to us

- And by way of example ... Paul says in v11 ... the same is true of us too
  - People don't know our heart > our essence > our plans and purposes unless we reveal it to them
  
- **Illustration – What Women Want**
- Comedy > Mel Gibson
- Marketing Exec > tasked coming up with an ad campaign selling feminine products
- Trying them out in his bathroom ... trying to get a sense of what they're like so he might come up with an angle to sell them
- Slips > falls in the bath > hair dryer falls in too > gets electrocuted
- When he wakes up, he discovers he has the power to hear what women are thinking
- As a result, he begins to understand the mind of women
- Now that would be great wouldn't it?
  - Imagine the ability to read the minds of others – scary!
  
- **Illustration – What am I thinking?**
- I wonder if anyone here thinks they can mind read now?
- Let's just try it ...
  - If I stand here silently looking at you ... let's see if you can read the mind of Stu Maze
  - Okay ... how did you go? What was I thinking?
  - No ... I was thinking of raisin toast ... not surprising really that I would be thinking of food
  
- None of you knew what I was thinking
  - For that to happen ... you would need me to reveal my thoughts to you
  - You can't work it out on your own ... you're totally dependent on me if you're to know
  
- Same with God
  - We can't work out who God is, what he is like, what his plans for us and his world are ... unless he chooses to reveal them to us
  - And he does that though the power of the HS ... who helps us to understand the truth of what he has made known about himself in the scriptures ... and the wisdom of the cross to save those who believe
  
- See examples of this in the NT with the disciples

- When Peter confessed Jesus was the Christ ... Jesus didn't compliment Peter on his wisdom or genius but said
    - *This was not revealed you by man but by my Father in heaven<sup>1</sup>*
  - Before the disciples received the HS at Pentecost
    - Not getting it > not understanding who Jesus truly was > why he came > what it means to follow him
    - After Jesus crucifixion they were hiding away from the Jewish authorities out of fear
  - BUT ... once they received the HS ... they fully understood who Jesus was and implications of what he'd been teaching them
  - Once they had the HS ... they were the empowered to boldly preach the death and resurrection of Jesus as the Christ
- HS equipped and enabled preachers like Paul and the Apostles to proclaim the wisdom of God seen in the death and resurrection of Jesus
  - **Application**
  - It's for this reason Christians trust and believe the Bible to be the Word of God
  - Because what Paul is saying here is that God worked in and through his Spirit to enable him and others to understand the truth of the gospel so God's wisdom could be made known to us
  - The scriptures didn't come together because the apostles had some random vision ... and hey presto ... here's a revelation
    - Of their own accord ... they didn't get it
    - They were afraid ... they wanted to hide and stay silent
  - But God ... working in them and through them ... God revealed himself to us as they spoke and wrote God's truth
  - The apostle Peter says the same thing ...
    - 2 Peter 1:20-21 <sup>20</sup> *Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. <sup>21</sup> For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.*
  - So behind everything written in the Bible by the 40-odd different authors ... over 1500-odd years is one author ... God the HS

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<sup>1</sup> Matt 16:16-17

- Which explains to us why
  - The message of the Bible is so consistent
  - How so much of the OT is fulfilled in the work and person of Jesus Christ
  - Why there is this overarching narrative from Genesis to Revelation
- Which gives confidence that what we read in the Bible are not the words of men ... but in fact, the word of God ... inspired and revealed to us through men like Paul
- If that's true ... then that means ... **all** the Bible is God's word
  - Not just the words of Jesus
  - Not just the bit we like
  - But all of it
- If the Bible is the Spirit inspired word of God ... then the Bible is not to be sifted and weighed and assessed by us as to whether it is true or not
- We're not free to pick and choose which bit we
  - obey or pay attention to; or
  - ignore and dismiss ...
- Because it's all revealed and inspired by God himself, through his Spirit as he worked in and through men like Paul ... to bring it to people like you and me
- Which means we can trust and believe that it contains true wisdom that is eternal ... and therefore worthy of our attention and obedience.

## 5. The wisdom of God revealed to the mature (14-16)

- In the same way that the HS enabled Apostles to understand the gospel and preach it to others ...
- The HS enables people like you and I to understand and believe the gospel
  - v14-16 <sup>14</sup> *The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.* <sup>15</sup> *The spiritual person ... has the mind of Christ*
- You see what he's saying
  - If the HS isn't doing his work in people ... then they're just not going to understand it ... they don't get it
  - The person without the Spirit thinks the message of the cross is foolish ... it's moronic and a scandal!

- His point is that an unbeliever is spiritually blind and spiritually deaf ... until God the HS tapped us on the shoulder and said
  - “Hey check this out ... you going to like this”
- It doesn’t mean they’re dumb.
- It just means they don’t get it / they can’t see it
  
- **Illustration**
- It’s like walking up to a deaf guy ... putting your headphones on his ears and saying, “Hey, you like that band?” ... and he doesn’t say anything
- Or walking up to a blind guy:
  - “You like my new shirt?”
  - “I don’t know?”
  
- Without the Spirit ... a person won’t get it
- They may understand it, but
  - they won’t see the need for it
  - they won’t see what’s so good about it
  - they’ll think it’s foolish and not worth taking seriously
  
- On the flip side ... the spiritual person ... the person in whom God the HS is at work and revealing
  - The wisdom of the cross
  - Problem of their sin
  - Need for forgiveness
  - Grace of God to us in Christ crucified ...
    - Can only see all of that because God has worked in them to open their eyes to see and believe
- It’s like God is the heavenly optometrist and he’s given them spiritual glasses to see
  
- **Application**
- Here at C@P we live to be and make disciples
  - I love how Lynne and Linda are running LoJ at the retirement village
  - I love how John asked his mates this week to read the Bible with him and come to Christianity Explored
  - That’s so encouraging
  
- However, there will be many times when you
  - Invite someone to come to church and they don’t come



- You share the gospel with them, and they're disinterested
- Ask a friend to read the Bible with you and they say "No"
  
- This passage says ... don't be surprised by that
- And when it does happen ... don't take it personally
- Because ... revealing spiritual truth ... requires the work of the Spirit
  - Not your cleverness > knowledge > wisdom > persuasive words
  
- And so, the most important thing is to
  - keep loving people
  - keep sharing the gospel message; AND
  - keep praying for the Spirit to
    - open their eyes
    - soften their hearts and
    - unstop their ears to the truth about Jesus
  
- That's why John and I want you to join with us in praying fervently for Spring Fiesta
- We can
  - Put on a great day
  - Be super organised
  - Preach a great sermon
  - Be super welcoming
- But if we aren't praying for God the HS to do his work ... it will all be in vain
- He won't bless it
- Because if it was a success and lots of people come and lots of people become Christian ... and we didn't pray ... what will we conclude?
  - **We** did it
  - **We** made it happen
  - It was our good work, planning, execution, effort
- But we must pray ... because he is the one who opens hearts, eyes and minds to see that this foolish message ... is actually the eternal wisdom of God that brings salvation to all who believe
  
  
- In contrast to the man without the Spirit, Paul says in v15-16 ... that the spiritual person ... has the mind of Christ
- The spiritual person can discern spiritual truths
  - They're able to understand the message of the cross
  - They get the fact that the Christ crucified is God's wisdom

- This is the mature person Paul is speaking of in v6
- Paul's point is ... if you're to be a mature person who understands the wisdom of God... you need the HS
  - And because the Spirit is at work in you ... you have the mind of Christ
- To have the mind of Christ
  - Not to have some super spiritual experience where we float off into the ether and somehow see into the thoughts and desires of Jesus
  - To have the mind of Christ is
    - to live like Christ
    - to have the same goals and purposes as Christ
- To be mature and have the mind of Christ ... is to apply the message of the cross to everyday life
  - This is what Paul is trying to do with the Christians in Corinth
  - Writing to encourage them to **live** like they have the HS
  - Live as though Jesus is in fact the Lord of their life
  - Wanting them to see that the wisdom of the cross ought to transform their lives so that they might be distinct from the culture of the city ... not the same as the culture of the city
- But by getting caught up in
  - Divisions and factions
  - Sexual immorality
  - Suing one another
  - Abusing their spiritual freedom
  - Boasting in spiritual gifts
    - Show they're
      - not being mature
      - not behaving like they have the HS
      - not living as though they have the mind of Christ
- And all through the letter ... as Paul is addressing these issues ... he keeps coming back to the wisdom of the cross
  - He keeps coming back to Jesus Christ and him crucified for the forgiveness of sins
  - He keeps saying ...
    - understand this wisdom from God you Corinthians
    - remember the gospel message I first told you

- pay attention the true wisdom that God has revealed to you
- And see how it ought to shape and mold and change your life
- You're a new person now
- You're in Christ > you're forgiven > you've been washed, cleansed, set apart and made new
- Now be the ppl Jesus as made you to be
- You have the mind of Christ!

- **Application**

- The truly wise person / the mature person is a person who has been given spiritual insight
- That spiritual insight enables you to
  - Not only hear and believe the message of the gospel
  - But also, live a cross shaped life transformed by the gospel
- As you read the Spirit inspired and revealed word of God in the Bible; and
- As you listen to the prompting of the HS in your life ... that's going to give you the mind of Christ so that you will grow & mature in
  - Humility
  - Selflessness
  - Loving others
  - Honouring God in all you do
  - Avoiding drunkenness and sexual immorality
  - Turning away from worldly idols and temptations
  - Taking up your cross
- As well as
  - giving you a deep desire to see those that you know and love who are perishing ... saved for eternity

## 6. Conclusion

- If you want to be truly wise and mature ... then you need spiritual insight
- First and foremost, you need the HS to open your eyes to the truth of the gospel and your need for forgiveness and the message of the cross
  - And friends if you're here this morning and you're not yet a Christian
  - Ask God to give you that spiritual insight so that you would see the only way you can be saved is to put your trust in Jesus Christ and his death on the cross for the forgiveness of your sin
- Secondly, if you're a Christian and the HS has helped you to see the wisdom of the cross ... then you also need spiritual insight so that you would be wise and have the mind of Christ ...

- so that you would understand the wisdom and the message of the cross in such a way that it transforms your entire existence into a life that is shaped by the gospel
- so that you and I would indeed live to be and makes disciple of Christ
- and have a deep desire to see all of Peakhurst and beyond, transformed by the good news of Jesus

**PRAY**