



**PRODIGAL**

**CHURCH**

SERIES TITLE: **PRODIGAL CHURCH**

DATE: **SUNDAY, JULY 19TH 2020**

SPEAKER: **CRAIG VERNALL**

SERMON TITLE: **GOD'S WISDOM AT WORK**

SCRIPTURES: **1 CORINTHIANS 2**

**Q1. If you were able to hear Craig's message on Sunday what is one take away that impacted, challenged or encouraged you most?**

Chapter 2 of 1 Corinthians can be one of those chapters that we read through and struggle to understand exactly what Paul is saying. We assume that it means more to his original audience than it does to us and move on from there. However, within this chapter is Paul's description of how the Holy Spirit works within the heart of people and how the wisdom of God is revealed even when it's deemed to be foolishness by the world.

**READ 1 CORINTHIANS 2:1-3.**

*"And so it was with me, brothers and sisters. When I came to you, I did not come with eloquence or human wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. <sup>2</sup>For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. <sup>3</sup>I came to you in weakness with great fear and trembling."*

**Q2. Sharing the good news of Jesus with others is not always an easy task. How can we take comfort from Paul's experience when he describes himself as someone "without eloquence or human wisdom...and in weakness with great fear and trembling"?**

**Q3. Could it be that we don't have to be overly confident to talk about Jesus?**

Paul also claimed that he relied upon the Holy Spirit's ability to touch people's lives as he spoke about Jesus crucified. *"My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, <sup>5</sup> so that your faith might not rest on human wisdom, but on God's power."*

**Q4. Would you have the courage to talk about Jesus more freely if you were confident that the Holy Spirit was empowering your words as you spoke by bringing conviction to the listener?**

**Q5. Have you ever relied upon your own strength when attempting to talk about Jesus' love for us through his death and resurrection? In what ways can we over complicate the gospel in our minds?**

Paul now describes a mystery to us that's at work in the lives of those who receive the gospel and believe in Jesus. This mystery is God's wisdom at work. The foolishness of preaching about Jesus cuts across all human wisdom and reveals God's glory.

## **READ HOW PAUL DESCRIBES THIS IN 1 CORINTHIANS 2:6-8.**

*"We do, however, speak a message of wisdom among the mature, but not the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. <sup>7</sup> No, we declare God's wisdom, a mystery that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began. <sup>8</sup> None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory."*

**Q6. Why is "Jesus crucified and resurrected" called the wisdom of God?**

Paul describes how the Holy Spirit searches our hearts to reveal things known and unknown. Because these are things largely unknown Paul describes them in an unusual way. Below I've highlighted his reference to these "things." This is Paul's way of describing the Holy Spirit's activity within the human heart which brings conviction and highlights our need for Jesus' gift of salvation.

## **READ 1 CORINTHIANS 2:11B-14.**

*"The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. <sup>11</sup> For who knows a person's thoughts except their own spirit within them? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. <sup>12</sup> What we have received is not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may understand what God has freely given us. <sup>13</sup> This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words. <sup>14</sup> The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit."*

**Q7. What are some ways the Holy Spirit has revealed things to you personally?**

**Q8. Can you describe to others what you experience when you know or sense that the Holy Spirit is bringing conviction upon your heart? Was it something you needed to repent of? Or a conviction about needing to respond to a prompting to do something or say something as God directs you?**

What Paul is describing is the very essence of how our relationship with God works. The Holy Spirit moves within our hearts by speaking to us through conviction or promptings. Sadly, we're prone to hardening our hearts from these whispers of the Holy Spirit.

Ephesians 4:18 says: *"They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts."*

**Q. What would cause you to harden your heart from responding to these promptings when they're described as "God's wisdom"?**

Paul's final words in 1 Corinthians 2 are a promise that comes with a high level of responsibility.

<sup>15</sup>*"The person with the Spirit makes judgments about all things, but such a person is not subject to merely human judgments, <sup>16</sup> for, "Who has known the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?"*

*But we have the mind of Christ."*

This is a big promise within scripture! Here we're told by Paul that we have (or can have) the mind of Christ. Take that in for a minute. *You have the mind of Christ.*

## **READ PHILIPPIANS 2:5-8.**

<sup>5</sup> *In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:*

<sup>6</sup> *Who, being in very nature God,*

*did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;*

<sup>7</sup> *rather, he made himself nothing*

*by taking the very nature of a servant,*

*being made in human likeness.*

<sup>8</sup> *And being found in appearance as a man,*

*he humbled himself*

*by becoming obedient to death—*

*even death on a cross!*

**Q9. What insights do these verses give us about what Christ's mind is like?**

**Q10. Do the verses in 1 Corinthians 2:15-16 tell us that we're beyond judgment when it comes to the Holy Spirit's leading in our lives?**

**Q11. How do we ensure that what we've heard from the Lord is truly the Holy Spirit and not our imagination?**

**To end your time together take a few minutes to read 1 Corinthians 1 and 2 out loud to one another. What new insights or applications did the Holy Spirit lift off the page as you read?**