

Wonderful Wisdom

✠ **Revealed (vv.6-11)**

✠ **for Our Glory (vv.7,12-16)**

In the name of Jesus, God's Wisdom sent from heaven, dear loved ones of God and Marie Rolph:

This verse from our text is on the bio-card for Marie: *“No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him.”* But when I looked this up in 1 Corinthians, I realized I've always misunderstood it. When you hear just that verse, don't you think he's talking about the mysteries of going to heaven and what God has in store for us there? That's what I thought too. But listen closely to the whole context: *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. No, we speak of God's secret wisdom, a wisdom that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began. None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. However, as it is written: “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. 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 of God.* Let's rejoice in the kindness of God that corrects our thinking and comforts our spirits. We revel today in **Wonderful Wisdom...**

✠ **Revealed (vv.6-11)**

It's always humbling for me to visit the sick and dying in their later years. To sit with them or kneel at their bedside and hear their prayers and confessions of sin and faith in God's forgiveness reminds me that I am only one in a long line of faithful servants of God that ministered to this precious, blood bought soul. Imagine the parents and grandparents that prayed for this baby before she was born. The fellow Christians who lifted up their voices to God in holy supplication as she was christened Marie Frances “in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” The Triune God put His Name on her there and guided and directed her life through Sunday School teachers, parents, pastors and Christian friends who knowingly and sometimes unknowingly led her to the cross of Jesus Christ again and again. And now after all these years, God grants me this undeserved privilege and grace to usher another child of God from this life into the next, trusting totally in the merits and mercy of God in Christ.

How can it be that after so many years our dear sister Marie could have only one regret in life? She could look at her husband with all his rough edges and say, “I'd marry you all over again.” She could look at her children and grandchildren with all their sins and weaknesses, their wandering ways and like Christian mothers everywhere keep loving and praying and loving to hear how her prayers are being answered by our gracious God. No friends or enemies came up in her short, short list of one regret. And I'm not saying she did not regret her sins. But she confessed those – the ones she knew and the ones she did not know, like the Psalmist David who prayed: *“Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults.”* (Psalm 19:12 KJV) Marie had no secrets from God because she trusted Christ and His forgiveness. Her one regret? In a long list of places she and Wilbur traveled, she never got to go to China. So she sent a friend with a pair of her slippers to walk on the Great Wall. Classic Marie.

The Lord's Apostle Paul is quoting from Isaiah 64 where the wider context reads like this: *Since ancient times no one has heard, no ear has perceived, no eye has seen any God besides you, who acts on behalf of those who wait for him. You come to the help of those who gladly do right, who remember your ways. But when we continued to sin against them, you were angry. How then can we be saved? All*

of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away. No one calls on your name or strives to lay hold of you; for you have hidden your face from us and made us waste away because of our sins. Yet, O LORD, you are our Father. We are the clay, you are the potter; we are all the work of your hand. Do not be angry beyond measure, O LORD; do not remember our sins forever. Oh, look upon us, we pray, for we are all your people. (Isaiah 64:4-9 NIV)

In 700 B.C. the LORD's prophet Isaiah was saying that no human being can conceive of such a God as the God of the Bible. He hides Himself from us sinners because we cannot even look directly at the sun, much less the God who created all the suns in all the solar systems and blazes in unapproachable light beyond our imagination. Some people think that God should just accept us the way we are when we do our best, but *"all our righteous acts are like filthy rags."* Can you overlook a filthy rag on a the bright white linen of a wedding banquet? Neither can God accept a single sin when He is absolutely holy. *"Be holy because I, the LORD your God, am holy,"* (Leviticus 19:2), He told His people. He commanded them and all people today to *"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind; and, Love your neighbor as yourself."* (Luke 10:27 NIV) But we love only ourselves by nature. We cannot see our sins against God or our neighbor, and thus would have absolutely no use for a Savior if left to ourselves.

The verse is true: *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.* Too many people – philosophers, scholars, and all the armchair “spirit backs” – want to invent their own “deep secrets.” But they only prove that whatever comes from the mind of man is sinful and of the devil. The **Wonderful Wisdom** of God, He alone has **Revealed** by His Holy Spirit in the Word, in His one sacred and holy Book, the only religious book in the world that even claims to have come directly from God. And get this! God has **Revealed His Wonderful Wisdom...**

for Our Glory (vv.7,12-16)

That makes Christians uncomfortable. How can we speak of “our glory” when God says, *“So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God”* (1 Corinthians 10:31 NIV)? We can only speak this way because God does through His holy Apostle Paul: *“We speak of God’s secret wisdom, a wisdom that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began....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.”*

The rulers and scholars of this world cannot begin to understand because *“we have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us. This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words. 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. The spiritual man makes judgments about all things, but he himself is not subject to any man’s judgment: “For who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him?” But we have the mind of Christ.*

One of my favorite family illustrations is the jailer at Philippi who heard prisoners Paul and Silas singing hymns late into the night and had no use for those foolish, crazy Christians. At least not until he woke up from the earthquake and thought his prisoners had escaped. When Paul said they were all there, the jailer still had a problem with God whom he had almost met by taking his own life. *“What must I do to be saved?”* he asked. *They replied, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household.” Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house. At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his family*

were baptized. The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them; he was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God—he and his whole family. (Acts 16:31-34 NIV)

This is **Wonderful Wisdom – Revealed for Our Glory**. I don't understand how Baptism could work faith in the who family just as it did for Lydia's family earlier in the same chapter Acts 16. But God reveals it is true. And what better **Glory** is there than to know that your children and grandchildren have God's Name on them too? Marie knew this and believed it with all her heart. It kept her praying for God's blessings on her loved ones all the way to the end, which for her is just the beginning.

The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may follow all the words of this law. (Deuteronomy 29:29 NIV) *So then, men ought to regard us as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the secret things of God.* (1 Corinthians 4:1 NIV) *But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.* (Philippians 3:20f NIV) *Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure.* (1 John 3:2f NIV)

There is still so much to discover on the other side when at last we're home with God. But having His **Wonderful Wisdom – Revealed for Our Glory**, glory that is really God's but which He wants to share with us as His dear children for Jesus' sake – we can leave the unanswered questions and trust the simplicity of God's grace in Christ. Walking on the Great Wall of China might be wonderful on earth, but in heaven all that will be gone forever. And we with glorified bodies like that of our Savior Jesus Christ will rejoice to be reunited with all our loved ones who trusted in Him alone. God bring us all to that glorious day as He has already done for our dear Marie – in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

For the study behind this sermon or for copies email m.cordes@comast.net .
You can also call: 651-484-1169. Hear the sermon at www.wels.us/newlife .

New Life Evangelical Lutheran Church
180 County Rd F - Shoreview, MN 55126