

## We Speak a Message of Wisdom

✠ **not of this age** (vv.6-10)

✠ **revealed by God the Spirit** (vv.9-13)

By Jesus, the Light of the world, dear ones, you are called, “the light of the world.”

Because **“all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”** (Romans 3:23 NIV11), there exists between us and God a deep chasm, a deadly canyon. The far side is hidden by clouds and darkness. Eventually death comes to everyone over here. The only Way across is the cross of Christ. But man in his foolish pride tries to build his own bridges for many ways to God – so many manmade bridges, one for every religion. But the longest ones leave travelers just as dead because all **“fall short of the glory of God.”** The most popular bridge today claims a big bang beginning and keeps people bouncing happily along, deadly sure there’s no God and no Judgment Day. But the far end of their bridge is lost in clouds of ignorance and unbelief. Everyone who takes that bridge to avoid God will have his wish. They’re dropping off the end into the fire pit from their bridge to nowhere. And they think Christians are fools!

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Ironically, Paul will say, **“We are fools for Christ.”** (4:10) What irony for the Christians in Corinth to think so little of Paul and the other apostles. Their reputation was so trashed in the world of their day that apostle-pastors could as well be captives on a death march at the end of Roman victory parade.

It hurts to be treated like a fool at work. Here in God’s house we don’t feel it like being the only one in class shining for Jesus. Paul admitted earlier: **“For 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....a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles,”** i.e., non- Jews. How many of us are **“wise by human standards... influential...of noble birth”** from grand old families with generations of wealth and power?

Remember Mary the humble virgin, Joseph a lowly carpenter, shepherds watching over their flocks at night, old Simeon and Anna humbly worshipping the God of hope in His temple! Isn’t that where we belong, with them? God **“chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things...so that no one may boast before him....As it is written, ‘Let him who boasts boast in the Lord.’** That’s why Paul did not come to them as a power preacher. Likewise a Jewish Christian named Richard Wurmbrand when asked to address members of Congress after Christians ransomed him from a Communist prison. Some of the congressmen complained, “All he talked about was Jesus Christ.” In eighteen books like *Tortured for Christ*, Wurmbrand maintained a hope and compassion even for those who tortured him by “looking at men... not as they are, but as they will be...I could also see in our persecutors...a future Apostle Paul...who became a convert.”<sup>1</sup> **“I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.”** (1:18-31 NIV84) Faith stands on the solid foundation that man’s wisdom cannot provide.

**“Yet we do speak wisdom among those who are mature, but it is not a wisdom of this world or of the rulers of this world, who are being reduced to nothing.”**<sup>2</sup> Powerful men like Hitler and Stalin died horribly like “the Beast,” as his servants called Emperor Nero. Tradition says he executed Paul and Peter, but soon died in misery. Each must stand before the Almighty Judge and give an accounting of every word and decree, every deed done in secret. **“Being reduced to nothing”** – all dust and ashes in the end.

<sup>1</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richard\\_Wurmbrand](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richard_Wurmbrand)

<sup>2</sup> Unless noted otherwise, *Evangelical Heritage Version, EHV*® © 2017 The Wartburg Project. [www.wartburgproject.org](http://www.wartburgproject.org)

That's where you come in, reflecting the shining face of God's own Son. By God's choice and direction, "*we speak wisdom that has been hidden in mystery—before the ages. God foreordained that this wisdom would result in our glory.*" What better *glory* than to be called God's own in Baptism? "*None of the rulers of this world knew it. (If they had known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.)*" Pilate and the Jewish leaders thought Jesus was a foolish carpenter from Nazareth. They fulfilled what the Holy Spirit said through Isaiah (64:4) (ca. 700 B.C): "*What no eye has seen and no ear has heard and no human mind has conceived—that is what God has prepared for those who love him.*"

"*The world through its wisdom did not know*" God. (1:21 NIV84) They keep trying with idols of human imagination. But the Holy Spirit looks deep into the heart. Without God's gift of **wisdom**, man cannot experience God in His grace and goodness. Fearing God's wrath, man tries to deny God's existence, heaping up more judgment as long as he can keep breathing. But he really has no answers because worldly wisdom cannot survive the coffin. We need God's **Wisdom** that can only be...

### revealed by God the Spirit (vv.9-13)

Knowing *what* to do is hard enough, but knowing *when* and *how* requires wisdom. God's **wisdom** teaches facts, but then also guides us in **wisdom** literature like the Proverbs, always encouraging that God gives **wisdom** "*generously to all without finding fault.*" (James 1:5 NIV84) Slow down and ask Him. Then let the Holy Spirit deliver through Word and sacrament as He desires. God's **wisdom** saves us from eternal heartache, but also from nervous days and sleepless nights. It focuses all our resources on seeking God's kingdom and His righteousness, with the faithful promise that "*all these things will be given to you as well.*" (Matthew 6:33 NIV84) Unclutter your life, renew your hope in God. **Wisdom** has free refills!

A Bible *mystery cannot be known unless God reveals it*, but *God wants to make it known* through His holy writers and witnesses. Example: We cannot know instinctively how awesome our glorified bodies will be on Judgment Day because no one has experienced this yet except our crucified and risen Savior. "*But God revealed it to us through his Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God.*" So the health of a congregation is directly proportional to how many of its leaders faithfully attend Bible Class. Also in the family, joyful experience comes when both parents, especially the father, search with *the Spirit* in Bible Class and worship. And if one won't, the other must all the more.

"*Indeed, who among men knows a man's thoughts except the man's spirit within him? So also, no one else knows God's thoughts except God's Spirit.*" Don't complain, "You just don't know how I feel." My experiences cannot be felt by you or visa versa. But Jesus knows how we feel. He's been through all of this before – body, soul and spirit. Christ's unfailing love kept Richard Wurmbrand sane in three years of solitary confinement underground with no light or sound. Suffering taught him sympathy to organize the *Voice of the Martyrs* from American for persecuted Christians all over the world.

Because "*all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God*" (Romans 3:23), there exists between us and God a deep chasm, a deadly canyon. The far side of heaven lights up in God's detailed roadmap of His Holy Word. "*We also speak about these things, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in words taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual truths with spiritual words.*" The Holy Spirit's languages of Hebrew and Greek for Old and New Testaments of the Bible are filled with God's **Wisdom** to show us our sin and light up our life with Jesus our Savior. Focused on the *Light of the world*, you shine as "*the light of the world*" (Matthew 5:14) reflecting His glory (2 Corinthians 3:18) so others can come across together with us. "*All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,*" but God's **wisdom** also teaches us that "*all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.*" (Romans 3:23f NIV11) No fool's gold here. In the light of God's **wisdom**, "Instead of the mournful dirge of 'everything is meaningless' (Ecclesiastes 1:2) of life lived apart from God, Christ has freed us to see all of life re-verses into a melodious *Te Deum* that will echo through eternity."<sup>3</sup> Speak and sing! Amen.

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<sup>3</sup> "Open Eyes to the Divine Glory of Being God's Masks," by Richard Gurgel. *Preach the Word* – Jan/Feb 2012, p. 3.

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