



Sunday September 08, 2019
1 Corinthians chapters 2 & 3

Do a quick Review of last week's message.

Today we cover chapters two and three of 1 Corinthians.

CHAPTER TWO

We divide chapter two into the following groupings of Scripture:

Proclaiming Jesus With Power (2:1-5)

The Spirit Unveils The Wisdom Of God (2:6-10)

The Spirit Reveals What God Has Given To Us (2:11-12)

The Spirit Imparts The Mind Of Christ To Us (2:13-16)

In chapter one, the apostle Paul emphasized the power and wisdom of God in the Gospel, the message of the cross of Christ. He continues on this emphasis and highlights that he preached the message of the Cross with the demonstration of the power of the Holy Spirit.

Proclaiming Jesus With Power (2:1-5)

1 And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God.

2 For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

3 I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling.

4 And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power,

5 that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

vs 1:

And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God.

As we saw earlier in chapter one, the "testimony of God" refers to the message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Paul reiterates that he did not depend on great eloquence, fine words or human wisdom "*no lofty words of eloquence or of philosophy as a Greek orator might do*" (Amplified Bible), to proclaim the Gospel.



vs 2:

For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

When ministering at Corinth, the apostle Paul intentionally chose to stay away from engaging in great philosophical discussions, and engaging in other things, and chose to stay focused on presenting Jesus Christ and His work on the cross.

Paul was a highly educated man and he could have easily engaged in great philosophical and theological debates and discussions. However, he chose to keep his focus on the message of the cross.

Luke records that Paul reasoned with the Jews and Greeks, at Corinth. But this reasoning was focused on Jesus Christ.

Acts 18:4

4 And he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and persuaded both Jews and Greeks.

5 When Silas and Timothy had come from Macedonia, Paul was compelled by the Spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus is the Christ.

An important lesson here. Often, in our sharing Christ, we could get drawn into meaningless debates, discussions and sharing of opinions that really don't amount to anything. We must avoid such digressions and stay with bringing the message of Christ.

In a similar manner, Paul in his epistle to Timothy, encouraged him to avoid engaging in "*fables and endless genealogies*" (1 Timothy 1:4) and "*profane and idle babblings and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge*" (1 Timothy 6:20-21).

vs 3:

I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling.

At Corinth, the Jews were very hostile. Luke records that "*they opposed him and blasphemed*" (Acts 18:6). So Paul left the synagogue and went to a house next door that belonged to a man named Justus and preached there (Acts 18:6-7). "*And many of the Corinthians, hearing, believed and were baptized.*" (Acts 18:8). AS a result there must have been threats to Paul's own life, for all that was happening, that caused him to be "*in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling*" as he mentions in vs 3.

The Lord Jesus appeared to Paul at this time:

Acts 18:9-10

9 Now the Lord spoke to Paul in the night by a vision, "Do not be afraid, but speak, and do not keep silent;

10 for I am with you, and no one will attack you to hurt you; for I have many people in this city."



vs 4-5:

**4 And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power,
5 that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.**

Paul points to the fact that his preaching was not a display of human wisdom such as great eloquence, rhetoric, or philosophy, but in demonstration of the Spirit and power. The word "persuasive" also means "enticing". He did not attempt to entice people into Jesus Christ with human wisdom.

This is an important aspect of ministry. While we must do the best we can in our preaching and teaching, we must stay away from depending on human elements of emotion, entertainment, slick marketing, motivational preaching or human personality or charisma. Our reliance must be on the Holy Spirit and His demonstrations of power to impact lives.

It is commonly stated: "what you draw them with, is what you draw them to". We do not want people to be drawn to and base their lives on human wisdom, or other things as emotion, entertainment, hyped up marketing, etc.

Our goal is to have people's faith established in the power of God.

As a church community, this is what we must pursue, the demonstration of the power of the Holy Spirit. Whether we are out on the street, gathering in small groups, in the malls, or in church services, we must desire to see the power of the Holy Spirit demonstrated as we share the message of the cross of Christ.

The Spirit Unveils The Wisdom Of God (2:6-10)

6 However, we speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing.

7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory,

8 which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

9 But as it is written: "EYE HAS NOT SEEN, NOR EAR HEARD, NOR HAVE ENTERED INTO THE HEART OF MAN THE THINGS WHICH GOD HAS PREPARED FOR THOSE WHO LOVE HIM."

10 But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.

vs 6-7:

6 However, we speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing.



7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory,

We do speak wisdom with those who are mature, who are able to handle the mysteries of God. This is not human wisdom - not what this world considers as wisdom, neither is it the kind of wisdom that the rulers (chiefs, top ranking) people engage in. This is earthly wisdom which, as Paul stated in chapter one, cannot help us know God (1:21).

The wisdom we engage in is what was once a mystery (a secret) and had been kept hidden (concealed away, kept secret). God had planned (predetermined) from before the ages (before the foundation of the world), to reveal this mystery as this time, "*for our glory*" or "*to lift us into the glory of His presence*" (Amplified Bible).

As Paul writes in Ephesians 3:3-6, the mystery that has been revealed is the Gospel, the Good News of Jesus Christ and that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs and share in all He offers through Jesus Christ.

As a side note, the Scriptures state several things that God planned from before the foundation of the world:

- Kingdom prepared for His people (Matthew 25:34)
- To reveal the mystery of the Gospel of Christ at a set time (1 Corinthians 2:7; Ephesians 3:3-6; Matthew 13:35)
- Believers foreknown, predestined, called, justified, glorified (Romans 8:29-30)
- Believers chosen in Christ (Ephesians 1:4)
- Good works to walk in (Ephesians 2:10)
- All of created completed (Hebrews 4:3)
- Lamb of God slain (1 Peter 1:19-20; Revelation 13:8)
- The Lamb's book of life (Revelation 17:8)

vs 8:

which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

This wisdom none of the chief (top ranking) people of this world knew. This was kept a mystery (hidden) from them. If they had known the mystery they would not have crucified Jesus Christ, in an attempt to hinder (or stop) the purposes of God. They would not have wanted God's wonderful plan of salvation to be made available.

...the rulers of this age....

There could be a double reference here, referring both to people as well as demonic powers. Paul uses the term "rulers" to also refer to demonic powers (as "principalities" in Ephesians 6:12, same root word).



...the Lord of glory.

Lord Greek '*kurios*' meaning supreme in authority, master, owner, sovereign, the possessor and disposer of a thing.

Jesus Christ is the Lord of glory, a title given to God Himself.

vs 9:

But as it is written: "EYE HAS NOT SEEN, NOR EAR HEARD, NOR HAVE ENTERED INTO THE HEART OF MAN THE THINGS WHICH GOD HAS PREPARED FOR THOSE WHO LOVE HIM."

Paul is referencing (not quoting directly) Isaiah 64:4: "*For since the beginning of the world Men have not heard nor perceived by the ear, Nor has the eye seen any God besides You, Who acts for the one who waits for Him.*"

God has great mysteries (hidden secrets) prepared for those who love Him.

Let's affirm this for ourselves: "What eyes have not seen, what ears have not heard, what man has not imagined, God has prepared such things for me, because I love Him".

vs 10

But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.

God reveals (uncovers, unveils, discloses) these mysteries to us by His Spirit. What a wonderful privilege! The Spirit of God is God. He knows all things, the deep things of God. And He reveals these to us.

As believers, we can pray and ask God to reveal the wonderful things He has planned for us.

Let's pray this together: "Dear Father, reveal to me by your Spirit, the things you have prepared for me. Help me to receive revelation of your plans and purposes by your Spirit".

The Spirit Reveals What God Has Given To Us (2:11-12)

11 For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God.

12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.



It is the spirit within a person that really knows the thoughts and motives of the person. You (your spirit) know who you really are. Similarly, it is the Spirit of God who knows the things of God.

As believers, we have received the Spirit of God. He dwells in us! And one of the purposes of Him being in us is so that we will know (perceive, become aware, understand) the things that have been freely given to us by God.

Let's affirm this truth together: "I have received the Spirit of God so that I might know the things God has freely given to me."

The Spirit Imparts The Mind Of Christ To Us (2:13-16)

13 These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

14 But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

15 But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is rightly judged by no one.

16 For "WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD THAT HE MAY INSTRUCT HIM?" But we have the mind of Christ.

vs 13:

These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

We have access to the wisdom of God. The mysteries (secrets) of God are revealed to us by His Spirit. We communicate spiritual truth with words which the Holy Spirit guides us to use. The Holy Spirit is the one who gives us the ability to impart, transfer and communicate the wisdom of God.

vs 14:

But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

natural Greek '*psuchikos*' used to refer to the soulish-life or sensuous life that is subject to appetite and passion.

man Greek '*anthropos*' refers to a human being (not gender specific).

The natural man, referring to the sense-ruled person, the individual who lives purely on the basis of natural senses and has no inclination towards the things of God. Such a person is not open, does not accept the things of the Spirit of God. The mysteries and secrets of God are foolishness (absurd, illogical) to him. And he does not know, perceive



or understand them, because these truths are judged, investigated, understood with the help of the Holy Spirit.

vs 15:

But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is rightly judged by no one.

However, the person who is spiritual, or empowered by the Holy Spirit is able to judge, investigate, examine everything because of the revealing work of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit provides the discerning and revelation to judge all things.

A natural man is not qualified to judge a spiritual man. They are operating on two different levels and are being guided by two different means. The natural man is sense ruled, governed by his senses. The spiritual man is guided by the Spirit. Hence the natural man cannot rightly judge a spiritual man.

vs 16:

For "WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD THAT HE MAY INSTRUCT HIM?" But we have the mind of Christ.

Paul references Isaiah 40:13 "*Who has directed the Spirit of the LORD, Or as His counselor has taught Him?*". God's ways and thoughts are much higher than man's. But for us as believers, because of the Holy Spirit who has been given to us, Paul affirms, we have the mind of Christ! We have access to the mind - the thoughts, purposes, and intents of God through His Holy Spirit who dwells in us.

What a privilege! Yet, we must learn to move from being "natural man" to being "spiritual man". That is we must not be sense ruled, but Spirit led.

CHAPTER THREE

Paul now turns attention to address the first issue he had addressed in the Corinthian church - that of division. He points out that divisions in the local church is (A) a sign of immaturity and carnality; (B) divisions should not exist because we are coworkers with God and with each other; (C) we must be careful how we build and with what materials we build, implying that carnal works are like wood, hay and straw; (D) divisions, envy and strife defile God's temple, the local church.

We group this chapter into 4 sections for our study purposes:

Spiritual Versus Carnal Believers (3:1-4)

Coworkers With God And With Each Other (3:5-10)

Build With The Right Materials (3:11-15)



Envy, Strife And Division Defiles God's Temple (3:16-23)

Spiritual Versus Carnal Believers (3:1-4)

- 1 And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ.**
- 2 I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able;**
- 3 for you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men?**
- 4 For when one says, "I am of Paul," and another, "I am of Apollos," are you not carnal?**

Paul had mentioned that we speak the wisdom of God to those who are mature and to those who are spiritual. Now Paul calls out the Corinthian believers as carnal (flesh ruled or sense ruled) and immature (babies) in Christ. Hence he had to feed them with milk, the basics of the Christian faith.

The reason for their immaturity and carnality is the "envy, strife, and divisions" resulting from people taking sides with individual ministers "I am of Paul" and "I am of Apollos". This resulted them in behaving as mere men instead of true spiritual (Spirit empowered) people they were.

As believers even though we have the Spirit of God in us and have been blessed by God with all His wonderful riches in Christ, if we live our daily lives, out of envy, jealousy and strife (or other fleshly works), we are limiting ourselves through our immaturity and carnality. We are "behaving like mere men" instead of living as new creation people in Christ.

Coworkers With God And With Each Other (3:5-10)

- 5 Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers through whom you believed, as the Lord gave to each one?**
- 6 I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase.**
- 7 So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase.**
- 8 Now he who plants and he who waters are one, and each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor.**
- 9 For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, you are God's building.**
- 10 According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it.**

How believers perceive and relate to ministers of God and thereby with each other is very important. How we as ministers of God perceive and relate to each other is very important. The apostle Paul clarifies several things here:



- All of us are ministers of God and the Lord has appointed to each one his assignment.
- Some plant, some water, but all increase, growth, fruit comes from God.
- So we do not exalt the one who plants or the one who waters. We exalt God who gives the increase.
- As ministers we are one - we are together in this work.
- Each minister will receive their reward from the Master according to what each has done.
- All of us are God's co-workers. We are co-workers with God and with each other.
- God's people are the field He wants watered and nurtured. God's people are His building that He is raising up. So all true ministry is about nurturing and building God's people.

As a side note, it is interesting that the Lord Jesus used similar terminology in John 4:35-38.

Our heart as ministers of God must be set on nurturing and building God's people. We see ourselves as co-workers all working towards this same purpose. Then, it no longer becomes an issue of who gets more prominence or who gets more importance. We get rid of competition and strife.

Each one has grace allotted to their life. Some press in for more grace and are able to see a lot more happen through their lives. The apostle Paul recognizes that he has been given grace to be "a wise master builder" (chief architect). He therefore lays the foundation for the works of God. This refers to his work as a pioneer, laying the foundation for many thriving local church communities.

God has appointed others to build on this foundation. Those who build must be careful how and with what they build above this foundation.

Build With The Right Materials (3:11-15)

11 For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

12 Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw,

13 each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is.

14 If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward.

15 If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

There is only one foundation for all work in God's Kingdom. The foundation is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.



However as each of us work, build and nurture people we must be careful how we do so.

If we build with fleshly, carnal things (1 Corinthians 3:3), that is if we do our work out of envy, strife, jealousy, competition, etc. (the works of the flesh Galatians 5:19-21), then we end up building things with wood, hay and straw. These things will not stand the test of God's fire. They will be burned.

However, when we build by the Spirit, we build with eternal things or things that are of God, gold, silver, precious stones, which will stand the test. We will receive our reward.

Paul does assure us that if our works are burned, we will still be saved, but we will not have any reward.

Envy, Strife And Division Defiles God's Temple (3:16-23)

16 Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?

17 If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are.

18 Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you seems to be wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise.

19 For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, "HE CATCHES THE WISE IN THEIR OWN CRAFTINESS";

20 and again, "THE LORD KNOWS THE THOUGHTS OF THE WISE, THAT THEY ARE FUTILE."

21 Therefore let no one boast in men. For all things are yours:

22 whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas, or the world or life or death, or things present or things to come—all are yours.

23 And you are Christ's, and Christ is God's.

While verse 16 is often quoted to an individual (and it is true for an individual), the context in which it was first written has to do with the local church. The local community of believers are the temple of God and God dwells amongst/in us.

We are not to defile the temple of God through envy, strife and division, by taking sides with one minister of God against another minister of God.

18 Let no one deceive himself....

If any one does not regard this truth, then this person is deceiving himself.

1 Corinthians 3:19 Paul quotes from Job 5:13

1 Corinthians 3:20 Paul quotes from Psalm 94:11

21 Therefore let no one boast in men. For all things are yours:



We do not derive our value and identity from any man or woman of God. All things (in this case, all people, all ministers) have been given to us from God, and we belong to Christ and Christ is God's. Hence, ultimately, we must see all things as coming from Him and for Him. He alone deserves the glory.

So in this chapter we see the antidote to division in the local church:

(A) Being spiritual instead of being carnal (3:1-4)

(B) Learning to be coworkers with God and with each other (3:5-10)

(C) Choosing to build with the right materials (3:11-15)

(D) Understanding that envy, strife and division defiles God's temple (3:16-23) and hence keep these out. Do not glory in man.

If we understand these four spiritual truths, we can truly be a people of one heart and one mind.

MINISTRY TIME | SALVATION CALL



LIFE GROUP STUDY GUIDE

Sunday September 08, 2019
1 Corinthians chapters 2 & 3

This is a simple guide for use in Life Group discussions. Our objective is to focus on the application of the Sunday sermon - how each one is becoming a doer of the Word and building their life on God's Holy Word. The Life Group meeting would normally last for 2 hours. Each Life Group would have up to 12-15 people.

Preparation

To prepare for the Life Group meeting, you can listen to the Sermon Key Points (sermon summary in five minutes) or the full length Sunday sermon. You can also review the Sunday Sermon notes. All these are available in the "All Peoples Church Bangalore" mobile App or online at apcwo.org/sermons . Pray for the Life Group meeting and invite the work and ministry of the Holy Spirit.

Welcome

The Life Group meeting may commence with a time of prayer, worship and a fun activity.

LISTEN to God's Word

Read the following Scripture passages: *1 Corinthians chapters 2&3*

INVESTIGATE God's Word Together

Please discuss a few of these together, giving time for people to share their insights. We encourage each one individually to make notes of their personal learning during the Group discussion.

1, Why is important to be dependent on the power of the Spirit and His demonstrations, rather than human wisdom in our preaching and teaching?

2, Examine the three aspects of the Holy Spirit's work Paul presents to us in this chapter, and how you can tap into this in your daily walk with God:

The Spirit Unveils The Wisdom Of God (2:6-10)

The Spirit Reveals What God Has Given To Us (2:11-12)

The Spirit Imparts The Mind Of Christ To Us (2:13-16)

3, In chapter 3, Paul is addressing the issue of division in the local church. Examine how each of the four insights that Paul presents, helps address and resolve the cause for division in the local church:

(A) Being spiritual instead of being carnal (3:1-4)

(B) Learning to be coworkers with God and with each other (3:5-10)



(C) Choosing to build with the right materials (3:11-15)

(D) Understanding that envy, strife and division defiles God's temple (3:16-23)?

If time permits, each one takes a few (3 minutes max) to share one or two key learning and how they see themselves applying it into their specific life situations. Encourage each one to participate and share.

FELLOWSHIP by sharing your life and spiritual journey

Each one takes a few (3 minutes max) to share anything from their walk with God, something God has been teaching them, a testimony of answered prayer or a specific challenge that they would like prayer for. Encourage each one to participate and share.

ENCOURAGE each other by praying and ministering to one another

Get into small groups of two or three and take turns to thank God and pray for each other in the light of what was learnt today. Listen to the Holy Spirit. Expect the gifts of the Holy Spirit to flow bringing healing, releasing miracles, prophecy, etc.

Regroup and pray together for:

1, families to be protected and strengthened

2, a mighty outpouring of God's Holy Spirit on us as a church and through us to bless many others in our city and nation. Nothing but a mighty work of God's Spirit can change our city and nation.

3, for the BUILD TO IMPACT project - for God's hand to guide us through the land search and acquisition process, and for finances to be more than enough to get this project done.

Close by thanking God together.