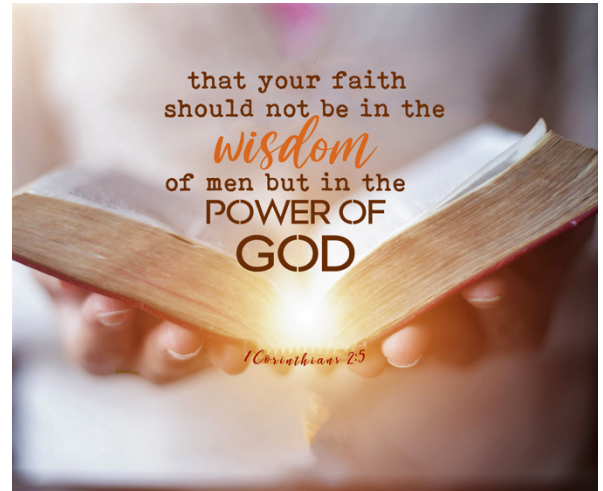


## 1 Corinthians, Chapter 2

St. Paul had intentionally proclaimed the message of Jesus Christ and Him crucified in plain terms so that the Corinthians' faith might not rest in human rhetoric or wisdom but in the work of God. In declaring the uniqueness of the Gospel, St. Paul finds its source in the depth of divine wisdom and its meaning revealed only by the Holy Spirit. As little as mankind could have invented the Gospel, so little can mankind understand it by the powers of the human mind. In contrast, Christians can discern and judge the revealed truth because the Holy Spirit has given them the "mind of Christ" (1 Cor. 2:16b).

**Read: 1 Corinthians 2.**



1. St. Paul has often been called one of Christianity's most-important preachers and evangelists because of the great missionary work he did. What was St. Paul's own assessment of his preaching skills? (1 Cor. 2:3-4)
2. How does St. Paul account for the effectiveness of his preaching? (1 Cor. 2:2, 4)
3. St. Paul discusses the wisdom that comes from God (as distinct from the wisdom that comes from human thinking, 1 Cor. 2:5). He begins by saying that God's wisdom is for the mature. How does St. Paul describe immature Christians (1 Cor. 3:1-3). What are the characteristics of a mature Christian? (Consider: Hebrews 5:13-14)
4. St. Paul describes God's wisdom as "a secret" and "hidden" (1 Cor. 2:7). He means that human wisdom by itself could never have figured out God's thinking. In verse 8, he points to the crucifixion of Jesus as proof of this. How would you say that the crucifixion of Jesus shows the failure of human thinking to understand God's plan?
5. Just as the words that St. Paul preached and wrote were taught to him by the Spirit (1 Cor. 2:13), so he says that no person can understand this Spirit-taught message unless the Spirit also enables that person to understand. Why can't people come to faith or remain in faith without the work of the Holy Spirit? How do the following Scripture passages explain this?
  - a. 1 Cor. 2:14
  - b. Ephesians 2:1-5
  - c. Romans 8:6-8

6. St. Paul refers to Jesus as “Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.” How has your relationship with Christ enabled you to experience the “power of God” and the “wisdom of God”?
  
7. What lesson(s) do you think Christians today might draw from what St. Paul says about his own sharing of the Gospel?

**Closing Prayer:** (*from LSB 526 – You Are the Way; Through You Alone*)

- 1 You are the way; through You alone  
Can we the Father find;  
In You, O Christ, has God revealed  
His heart and will and mind.
  
- 2 You are the truth; Your Word alone  
True wisdom can impart;  
You only can inform the mind  
And purify the heart. Amen.

**Sources:** God’s Word for Today: 1 Corinthians (CPH: 1997), LifeLight: 1 Corinthians (CPH: 2007), Luther’s Works (CPH, Fortress), Concordia Commentary: 1 Corinthians (CPH: 2000)