

## **The Humbling Gospel**

1 Corinthians 1-2

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Many years ago I wrote a book called *The Gospel According to Jesus*; some of you know about that. Followed up with a book *The Gospel According to the Apostles*, and up to this point have left unwritten *The Gospel According to Paul*. That's going to show up in a while as a final effort in that trilogy. The gospel according to Paul is important because it's under assault today. The doctrine of justification as outlined by the apostle Paul as being attacked by those who have invented something called "The New Perspective on Paul." And we need to be clear about what the New Testament says and what the Holy Spirit inspired Paul to write with regard to the gospel. So over the last few days, since Thursday night, we have been looking at the gospel as Paul was inspired to write it in the New Testament. We have learned that it is a glorious gospel. Second Corinthians, chapter 4 was our text. It is the satisfying gospel, Romans 3. It is a reconciling gospel, 2 Corinthians, chapter 5. And then yesterday we looked at the fact that it is a sovereign gospel. And the final message, this morning, is to look at the reality that it is a humbling gospel – it is a humbling gospel. Now, I know that, for the most part, when I teach the Bible I go deep down into a few verses, but we've been approaching it a little bit differently. Because of limited time and wanting to cover as much as we could, we've been taking some larger portions of Scripture, some bigger chunks, even sweeping through a few chapters at a time, such as we did Saturday, when we spent our way through Romans 9, 10 and 11; taking more of an overview of Scripture, which is so very important if we're going to get our arms around the gospel according to Paul.

Now, for this morning, I want you to go back to 1 Corinthians 1 and 2 – 1 Corinthians 1 and 2 – and the text that I read to you is the text that I want you to look at. Obviously, we're going to take an overview, kind of the bird's eye view rather than the typical worm's eye view that we usually take. I'm going to ask a question that does relate to the theme. We're going to be looking at the humbling gospel. We won't make that point until everything else has been said. So that will kind of come in at the end. But to begin with, I want to pose the question why do we love the Bible? Why did you come to the Truth Matters Conference? Why do you come to Grace Community Church? Why do you come week after week? Why do you go to a fellowship group? Why do we sell so many books here? Why do people download sermons at the Grace To You website? Why do you have this appetite for the Word of God? Why does it seem to be an insatiable appetite? Why have you paid money and taken up your precious time to come all the way here, knowing that there's virtually going to be no entertainment, it's just going to be an intense look at the Word of God? Where does this love come from? Why do you have this love for the Bible? Why do you have this love for the gospel?

That's a very important question. Is it that you're smarter than the rest of the world? Is it that you're more insightful than the rest of the world? Is it that you have heard some more convincing arguments for the veracity of Scripture? Is it that somebody gave you apologetics, and those apologetics seem so reasonable to you that you have embraced the Scripture? What is it that has created this love in your heart?

That's something all of us here at Grace Church experience. We never seem to get enough of the Word of God. It's like food to us, and no amount of food satisfies you for any permanent length of time. You need to be fed again, and again, and again, and again physically; it's the same thing spiritually. What is it that generates this appetite? Why do we feel the way we do about the Bible and the gospel? Why is it that having understood the gospel, believed the gospel, we can hear the gospel preached a thousand times and have our hearts literally set on fire again? Why is it that we are like those on the road to Emmaus who, when the Scripture was explained to them, became the fellowship of the burning heart? What created that? How did we separate ourselves from the world's indifference toward the Bible, and the world's hostility toward the Bible? The people we meet don't have any interest in the Bible.

In fact, many churches recognize that, and so they eliminate the Bible, trying to give people what they really want. The Bible would not only bore them to death, it would offend them. But what happened to us? Why are we the ones that love the Bible? Why are there people all over the world that love the Bible? Well, the Scripture gives us an answer to that right in this text. But, first of all, let me just camp on that idea, that if you're a true Christian, you love the Bible. Let me say it again, it's pretty simple, if you're a true Christian, you love the Bible. Psalm 19 is probably your experience. Psalm 19, verse 10, says this, that the word is more precious than gold, "yea, than much fine gold: and sweeter also than honey from the honeycomb." Why is the truth so sweet to us? Why is it so precious to us? Can we say with David in Psalm 119:97, "O how I love Your law?" And five other times in that same Psalm he said it again, "I love Your Law, I love Your Law, I love Your Law." Many other times he said, "I delight in your Law. I delight in Your Law. I rejoice in Your Law," meaning Your Word. "I love Your Commandments."

Paul even says that Christians can be designated by this title. They are those who love the truth. Second Thessalonians 2:10, "Unbelievers are those who do not love the truth." John puts it this way. He says, "If you love the Lord, you keep His commandments." Your love for the Lord is demonstrated in your appetite for the Word of God, even those things that are mandates and commandments. John says that a number of places, John 14, John 15, and in his epistle 1 John 5:2 and 3. Psalm 40 and verse 8 says, "I delight to do Your will, O my God." And then it follows up with this, "Your Law is within my heart."

For the true believer there is an appetite in the heart for the Bible, for the truth, for the gospel. Peter, in fact, says in 1 Peter, chapter 2, that we have an appetite for the word the way babies long for milk. In other words, it's a singular, all-consuming desire, never satisfied. When Jesus had taught the crowds in the sixth chapter of John and made the message very hard to receive, they left; John 6:66, "Many of His disciples went away and followed Him no more." Jesus looked at the ones who remained and said, "Will you also go away?" And Peter, speaking for the rest of true believers said, "Where will we go? You have the words of eternal life." We can't live without Your words.

The mark of a true Christian is a hunger for the Bible, a hunger for the Scripture. It's not enough for us to have bread. We don't live by bread alone; we live by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God. God's true church, okay, God's true church always, at all times, and in all places, hungers for the truth of Holy Scripture, to read it, so as to understand it, so as to rejoice in it, to delight in it, to embrace it, to proclaim it, to apply it, and to worship God for it. Sadly, however, juxtaposed against that appetite of the true church is the interest of the false church. Serious Bible study and diligent labor in the Scripture to feed the true church of God doesn't seem to be the high priority anymore.

Not too many years ago, Jim Packer wrote an introduction to a very old book, it's called The Christian Directory, and it's not a phone book. The Christian Directory was written by Richard Baxter. Richard Baxter was a Puritan who lived between 1615 and 1691, lived 76 years. Richard Baxter was a profound thinker about Scripture, and he wrote The Christian Directory. I have a copy of it. Massive. It is a Christian directory in the sense that it directs Christians as to how they should live their lives before God from Holy Scripture.

Packer, in his introduction to The Christian Directory, says this, "Contemporary evangelicalism is ego-centric, zany, simplistic, degenerate, half magic spell nonsense, and a string of how-to's." And then he goes on to say, "Compare this with Baxter's Christian Directory, with more than a million words of profound interpretation and application of the Bible." Packer says, "The Christian Directory is a high level of intelligent, Bible-based, theologically integrated wisdom with unflinching and unimpaired clarity that is dazzling to the mind." What has happened to us? R.C. Sproul says, "Our culture is embedded in proud mediocrity, junk art, junk music, junk thinking, and we've accommodated it with junk church." We get mediocrity because we want mediocrity. This culture craves mediocrity. It doesn't just accept it, it craves it. And so we have a kind of Christian pop culture to accommodate it. And so-called churches have decided to eliminate the transcendent, eliminate the profound, eliminate the deep theological, eliminate the Bible, eliminate exposition, feed mediocrity, give the hungry crowds what they crave, and starve the true church. That doesn't satisfy you, does it? It doesn't satisfy you; that's why you're here. It doesn't satisfy me, either. I can never get enough. We love the Bible. We love theology. We love theologically informed worship.

Why do we love it? Why do we trust it? Why do we believe it? Why do we study it? Why do we memorize it? Why do we talk about it? Why do we teach it? Why do we apply it? Are we better off than other people? Are we just smarter, are we more intelligent? Have we been given a better set of evidences, convincing us that the Bible is worth trusting and believing?

We've got some hints here to the answer. Luther said this, "The Bible cannot be understood simply by study or talent. It must come from the Holy Spirit." Zwingli, great Reformer in Zurich, said, "Even if you receive the gospel of Jesus directly from an apostle, you can't act according to it unless your heavenly Father teaches you and draws you to Himself by His Spirit." John Calvin had the same view. It was Calvin's view that the Bible can only be believed, understood, obeyed, and loved when God regenerates through the power of the Holy Spirit and gives life to the dead sinner. Why do you believe the Bible? Why do you love the Bible? Why do you hunger for the Bible? Why do you relish the truth of Scripture? Why do you enjoy hearing it? Why does the breaking of biblical truth on your mind create such joy, and elicit such praise and such worship? It is because of a mighty work that has been done in your heart by the Holy Spirit, and He has literally made you alive from the dead. It's regeneration. We're going to talk about that.

There's no better treatment of this issue than the text before us which I read to you earlier. First Corinthians chapters 1 and 2, starting in verse 18, going to the end of chapter 2. And obviously we're going to look at this in a broad sense, but you're going to get the message here, I think. Two points I want you to understand out of this text, just two. Number one: why non-Christians reject the Bible – why non-Christians reject the Bible. Number two: why Christians love the Bible. What's the difference here? There's a lot of overlap, interweaving, restatement, but we're not going to go through all of that, I'm just going to give you the big picture here, okay? Question number one: why do non-Christians reject the Bible? I'm going to give you five reasons. They're right here, Paul lays them out for us. Five reasons, number one – and we'll approach it from the standpoint of the revelation of the

gospel in the Scripture – why do non-Christians not believe the biblical gospel? Why? Number one: its message is unreasonable. Its message is unreasonable. Or if you will, as far as human minds are concerned, it's irrational. And man is enamored with his own mind, is he not?

Maybe it wasn't quite so bad before the Enlightenment, but here we are all the way centuries past the Enlightenment, and we are the inheritors of the worship of the human mind. We are deep into the age of reason. And the Bible just doesn't have a place. The biblical gospel doesn't have a place. Verse 18: "The word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing." Those who are perishing are a category of people who are on their way to hell. To people who are in the process of headed for hell, people who are in the perishing paradigm, this gospel, this message concerning salvation through the death of Christ on the cross, is foolishness. The word foolishness appears half a dozen times in the opening of this section, it's so important. By the way, the Greek word for foolishness, you will recognize – it is the word moron; that is the word, actually the word, moron. It is stupid, it is pointless, it is brainless, moronic. It doesn't suit human wisdom to say that there is one God, there is one way to God, and that way to God is through the God/Man; that Jesus Christ who was a crucified Jew, executed by the Romans, rejected by His people, put on a cross, et cetera, et cetera, and salvation comes by rejecting any good work of your own, and recognizing your wretched sinfulness, and embracing by faith the sacrifice of Christ in your place. That is contrary to human wisdom. The fallen mind says you're good, and if you're really good, you're going to be okay. That's human wisdom reason, fallen human reason dominated by pride.

The whole message of the cross is stupid and pointless, we don't need to go over it, we've been going over it for the last three days. It doesn't suit human reason to tell men that they are on their way to hell, that they are unwilling and unable to do anything about it on their own. They don't have the rational power, or the moral power, or the spiritual power to change their condition. They are impotent before God. That doesn't suit human pride. But that's what the Bible says, and that's why they don't love the Bible, they don't like the Bible. There are people who are indifferent to the Bible. And they will remain indifferent to the Bible unless they become hostile to the Bible because they actually hear what the Bible says. The whole idea of the gospel, the biblical gospel, is unreasonable, it's irrational, it's foolish, it's moronic.

Secondly, it's unattainable. We have to admit that one of the reasons they reject the biblical gospel is because frankly, it's unattainable, because they're going to go after it with human reason. That's the mechanism with which fallen men go after everything. They solve all problems with their human reason. This seems reasonable. This seems rational. And God has given us human reason to achieve certain ends in the physical realm. And so they just shift those over into the spiritual realm, and they can figure it out – they can figure it out. And there are those people that you meet occasionally who say, "I'm a very spiritual person," as if they had sort of a Harry Potter world in which they could catapult themselves. They can put themselves into some domain where people fly around and weird things happen, spirit beings do things, and they can adjust themselves to that world and perceive the things that the rest of us hoi-polloi can't figure out. What do you mean you're a spiritual person? The idea that by your mind, and your intuition, and your supposed senses, you can catapult yourself into a true understanding of the biblical gospel, belief in that, and love for that is just not true. Go to verse 19. "It is written, 'I will destroy the wisdom of the wise and the cleverness of the clever I will set aside.' Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not come to know God." You can't get to God through human wisdom; what seems reasonable, sensible, rational.

And verse 19 is quoted from Isaiah 29:14, it's a quote from the Septuagint, which many of the New Testament writers who were Greek speakers would read. Isaiah had come along and warned the northern kingdom, Israel. He warned them of coming judgment because Sennacherib, the king of Assyria, was breathing fire on their borders. He was threatening the northern kingdom. Deliverance wasn't going to come from men. If there was to be any deliverance, if there was to be any act of rescue, it wasn't going to come from the wisdom of men. "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, the cleverness of the clever I will set aside." The people themselves, in all their wisdom, with all their strategy, and getting all their sages and wise people together and leaders together couldn't come up with any way to deal with the Assyrians. God did deal with the Assyrians, of course, later, in Isaiah 37:36, by sending an angel who literally killed a hundred and eighty-five thousand of them. In other words, there's a dimension in which God acts which is not available to men in their wisdom. They couldn't deal with the treachery on their borders by human wisdom.

Jeremiah 8:9 says, "The wise men, behold they have rejected the word of the Lord, so what wisdom do they have?" What's left? So in verse 20 Paul calls them together. "Where's the wise men? Bring them on. Where's the scribe?" That would be the expert. "Where's the debater of this age? Hasn't God made foolish the wisdom of this world?" Get all the fools together, all the philosophers, all the educators, all the theorists, all the theologians. By the way, that verse 20 alludes to Isaiah 19:12 and Isaiah 33:18, and I think it also alludes to the supposed counselors of Egypt, who were made into fools by God, as well as the scribes of the Assyrians, who were also fools. They're all fools. Bring them all on, because verse 21 says, "In the wisdom of God, the world through its wisdom doesn't come to know God." He's just borrowing little snippets from the Old Testament that would be familiar to the people to make his point that all the wisdom of the world, all the cleverness of the clever people, all the wise men, all the lawyers, all the debaters, philosophers, together cannot come to know God; verse 21. You can take all the elite minds of all the universities in the world, in our land, put them all together collectively they cannot come to know God. You can't get to God from the vantage point from the base of human wisdom, even at its highest, even at its best. So why do non-Christians reject the Bible? Why do they resent the Bible? Why do they have no interest in the Bible? Why are they indifferent to the Bible, hostile to the Bible? Simply because the biblical gospel is unreasonable to them and it is unattainable to them anyway.

Thirdly, if they could attain to it, it would be unbelievable to them. It would be unbelievable. And these, of course, overlap. But in verse 22 he says, "The Jews are asking for signs and the Greeks search for wisdom. But we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block, and to Gentiles foolishness." It was the cross that was the problem. The Jews couldn't handle that. What sign did they want? They wanted sign in the moon and the stars and the sky that had been predicted by the prophets of the coming of the Lord and the establishment of the promised Kingdom. They had plenty of signs. Jesus had power over disease, demons, death, nature, literally ended disease in the land of Israel for the duration of His ministry. They had seen His great power. Nobody ever, ever said Jesus' miracles were invalid. Nobody ever discredited His miracles. Nobody tried to discredit His miracles. Even the resurrection, they knew He rose from the dead, they knew that, the leaders knew it. And they bribed the soldiers to lie and say His body was stolen when they knew that wasn't the case. You could never give those people enough signs – never. All these people who go around supposedly doing phony miracles with big masses of people, you see them on television, who think that's going to bring people to the gospel are wrong. That's not what brings people to the gospel. You can do all the phony signs you want; that's not what convinces people. The only reason people believe the gospel is because the Holy Spirit gives them life, and the only way He can give them life is through

the proclamation of the truth. They're begotten again by the word of truth, 1 Peter 1:23.

So frankly, the whole thing is unbelievable. For the Jews, they wanted signs, especially the big sign, and what they wanted to see was the Messiah come, signs in the heavens, and then they wanted to see the Messiah affirm their religion, right? If Jesus is the Messiah, He's going to pat us on the back because we're the pure religionists. But Jesus came in and used His harshest, most damning words for the religious leadership of Israel. Read Matthew 23 – called them “whited sepulchers; on the outside painted white, inside full of dead men's bones.” He said they produced sons of hell. They didn't expect the Messiah to say that. They didn't expect Messiah to attack them, they expected the Messiah to attack the Romans. But instead, He's killed by the Romans. That is a big stumbling block. How can He be the Messiah when the nation rejected Him, the leaders rejected Him, and the Romans killed Him? To the Greeks, the whole idea was ridiculous, that a crucified Jew, a Jew – very obscure people in a very obscure place, an outpost in the Roman Empire in the land of Israel – that that man who was crucified by the Romans and rejected by His people is the eternal God, the one true God, the only God, and that He came into the world in human form, died a substitutionary death in order to provide salvation, the only way of salvation for sinners – that is just absurd.

If you are to go to Circus Maximus in the city of Rome today, you can find an old location there of stone carving, some of it still remains. It's a carving of a cross and hanging on the cross is a man with the head of a jackass. And down below is a guy bowed over and it says, “Alexus Menos worships his God.” That was a mockery of Christianity. What kind of a person bows down to worship a crucified jackass? That's how stupid that was – totally unacceptable. Frankly, it's the gospel is stupidity, its foolishness, it's not really believable. And furthermore, they're stuck because it's not attainable, because the only way they go after things is human reason. And frankly, were they to be able to go after it, they wouldn't, because it's too bizarre.

Let me give you a fourth problem, why people don't believe the gospel. Its representatives are unremarkable. Yes, its message is unreasonable, its reality is unattainable, its truth is unbelievable, and its people are unremarkable. You say, “Look, God, if You're going to get this thing across, You're going to have to put this message in the hands of the powerful people. You've got to get this to the big shots. They can make it believable.” Really? That wasn't God's plan. Go back to the text; verse 26: “Consider your calling, brethren, there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble.” Three times it says not many. Not many, not many, not many – the majority of believers are not impressive, not impressive especially to the world of elite minds. We're not the elite intellects of the world. We're not the mighty, in the sense of being powerful influencers, people in great positions of power. And we're not noble. What does that mean? High born, well born, socially ranking, royal – no. Well, what are we? Well, verse 27 says, “We're foolish, weak,” and verse 28 says, “We're based, despised, and we're the things that are not.” We are not wise, we are rather foolish, contrasting those two verses. We are not mighty, we are rather weak. We are not noble, we are base.

See that word base in verse 28, the base things of the world? The Greek word for base is agenēs. Genos is to be born, that's why we get the word genetics from that root. We are agenēs. What does that mean? We haven't been born, we're unborn. Another way to say that – we don't exist. The word came to mean the insignificant – the insignificant. We're not the movers and shakers. And then he even goes deeper. It would be enough to be agenēs, unborn, not even existing, but he goes even lower, despised, and then he says, God has chosen the things that are not, or the ones that are not. That's a present participle of the verb to be, eimi, and it is the most contemptible expression in the

entire Greek language. It is this, "You don't even exist." If you really wanted to lower somebody, "you don't even exist." So "God has chosen not many wise, according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble," God has chosen – please notice, it keeps repeating – God has chosen, God has chosen, God has chosen, – in case you're still struggling over the doctrine of sovereign election. God has chosen, God has chosen, God has chosen, four times, verse 29, "So that no man may boast before God."

The bottom line we're driving at here is we're unremarkable. Illustrated that – just thought just jumped in my mind in the first service – I was with Deepak Chopra on one occasion between takes on a television talk program. He is a Hindu mystic who is also a medical doctor. And he's a bright guy. And he's figured out how to separate people from their money. So he is a very bright guy, but he believes that he is God. And he's written a lot of stuff on this. And he's very spiritual, very esoteric, very Hindu, all of this, and it was very difficult for him to deal with me – very difficult. And one time we were having this conversation and he said, "Well, you wouldn't know anything about that anyway. You wouldn't know anything about that." And I said, "Well, as a matter of fact I do understand that. I understand that philosophy. I understand exactly where you're coming from." I gave him a little bit about it, and I said, "In fact, I wrote a book on that." And he said – this is a quote, "I wouldn't read anything you ever wrote." Fine; I don't even exist. "You're not even alive in my world. Go away." That's how they look at us, these elite minds. See, the unbelieving people are in the condition they're in because of these constraints. They're not impressed with us. They're not impressed with our message. They are impressed with themselves. And the problem is, they want to follow their own reason, and you can't get there that way.

There's one other thing we might say. And not only are the people unremarkable, but the preachers are unfashionable. Yeah, that's Paul, chapter 2, verse 1. "When it came to you, brethren, I didn't come with superiority of speech or wisdom." When he first came to Corinth to preach and establish the church, he said, "I didn't come with superiority of speech and of wisdom." What's he talking about? He's talking about what they were used to hearing from teachers and philosophers. I mean the Greeks were into oratory. They were into a sort of intellectual labyrinth. They were into philosophical complexities, layered arguments. They reject the message because it's just not impressive. Paul says, "I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified." "You just kept saying that same ridiculous, moronic, foolishness about that man and that cross. Where is the esoteric cleverness? Where is the rational speculation? Where is the philosophical complexity?" That's why in 2 Corinthians 10:10, they said of him that "his personal presence is unimpressive and his speech is contemptible." Who would listen to him? He's not clever. He has none of that sophia, none of that sophistication, sophisticated wisdom. The message was offensive, and the messengers were unimpressive, and the preachers who represent the message were unfashionable.

Now, not only did he have this narrow minded, simplistic message he just keep beating to death, verse 2, but he says that in verse 3, "I was with you in weakness, fear, and much trembling." Come on, where's the swagger, man? Where's the swagger? You've got to have some swagger. You've got to be brash; got to have some self-confidence; got to have some dominance. The brash philosophers and teachers of the world at that time did that. He comes in weakness, fear, trembling, and his message and his preaching, verse 4, "is not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power so that your faith wouldn't rest on the wisdom of men but on the power of God." He understands. This is not about apologetics, this is not about evidences. This is not about convincing them. This is not about channeling their intellect. This is not about putting their

reason in the right groove. They are fallen people. They are naturally in the dark. They are naturally dead. They are double-blinded by Satan. They are alienated from the life of God, and they cannot believe, they will not believe.

Non-Christians, bottom line, don't believe the Bible because they can't. They can't. And you can't make it reasonable. And all your efforts of being fashionable and clever and trying to impress them aren't going to work. You cannot by human reason find God, find Christ, find the gospel, find salvation, and come to love the Scripture. Man's wisdom can do amazing things in the physical world, temporal world; science, technology, genetics, medicine, industry, arts, culture, academics, all kinds of achievements. But man's wisdom individually and collectively cannot know God savingly. They can know God exists, Romans 1, right? They can know God has a moral Law, Romans 2. They can't know God. The gospel is not available to human wisdom. That's the problem. Men find the path that appeals to them is the path of self-satisfying human reason; can't get there that way.

So why do we believe? Let's turn the corner. We have a few minutes. So why do we believe? You say, "Well, we're the smartest of all these people." No, we're not. Why do we believe? Verse 6, "Yet – yet," now we turn the corner dramatically, "yet, we do speak wisdom." Wait a minute. They don't understand; we're the wisest people on the planet. Do you know right now, in this moment, gathered in this room, is the most pure, true, profound, accurate, all encompassing, sweeping collection of human wisdom in the city of Los Angeles, or the state of California – right here. And the sad part is nobody outside is asking us anything, and we've got all the answers. We speak wisdom. I keep waiting for somebody to call me from Washington, from anywhere. Just ask me – just ask me. One guy was trying to mock me on a radio interview one time, and said, "Where did you go to law school?" "I didn't go to law school, I just read the Bible." Oh, that just makes them really angry.

"We do speak wisdom among those who are mature." There's the first key. Mature is the word – well it's actually *teleios*, complete. I read it that way. Complete, saved, been made complete, for you're complete in Him. That's regeneration. Why do we know wisdom? Why do we speak wisdom? Because we've been made complete. We have come to Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, Colossians says. This is God's gracious gift to us in our regeneration. It isn't because we were smarter than anybody else, it was because the Spirit gave us life, the Spirit gave us light, the Spirit quickened us, made us alive, took off the blinders, and helped us to see the truth of the gospel. Remember back in 2 Corinthians 4, "The God who said let there be light, has shone in our hearts to give the light of the glory of the gospel in the face of Jesus Christ." God turned on the light and turned on the life through the work of the Spirit. We love the Bible because of the work of the Spirit. He has given us life, and listen to me: this is life that is sustained by food, like your physical life, and spiritual life is sustained by food and the food is what? It's the Word of God. It's the Word of God.

Back to verse 6, "The wisdom that we have who have been made complete in Christ is a wisdom, however, not of this age, nor of the rulers of this age who are passing away." It's not the wisdom of the world. It's not what James calls the wisdom from below. It's the wisdom from above, James 3:15 to 18, that comes down, and is pure and peaceable. We have the true wisdom.

But look at the culture. If they had their way, the power brokers in this society would shut every believing Christian, every Bible Christian, they would shut them out of the public discourse permanently. They don't want to hear anything from us. The wisdom that we have is contrary to their wisdom. This is the wisdom that is not passing away. Verse 7, "We speak of God's wisdom." Wow!

Do you understand how important you are to the world? You might not be fashionable. I might not be fashionable in terms of what the world likes to hear, be entertained by. You might not be remarkable, and I'm not remarkable, none of us is really remarkable, we're just the hoi-polloi here. But you speak God's wisdom, because the Holy Spirit has given you life, and you love His truth. This wisdom is in a mystery. Mustērion is Paul's word for the gospel that was hidden in the Old Testament, is fully revealed in the New. You speak wisdom, the wisdom of the mystery, he even says it, "the hidden wisdom which God predestined before the ages to our glory," the wisdom of the gospel which God predestined to unveil in this time and this age to bring His people to glory. We speak God's wisdom.

Verse 8 says, "It's the wisdom which none of the rulers of this age has understood. For if they understood, they wouldn't have crucified the Lord of glory." The most highly trained, biblically literate, group of leaders on the planet at the time of Jesus, who knew the Old Testament better than anybody else, which is the only source of divine revelation, were the Pharisees and the leaders of Israel, and they couldn't understand it, or they wouldn't have crucified Him. Why didn't they understand it? Back to verse 9: because it contains things the eye can't see and the ear can't hear. That means you can't – that's back to the reason thing – that's empiricism. You can't see it, you can't hear it. In other words, it can't come to you from outside. It can't come to you empirically, externally, experimentally. Then it says in verse 9, "And it hasn't entered the heart of man," it can't come from inside. You can't know this mystery, this gospel, this saving gospel of Christ. You can't know it experimentally, experientially on the outside. You can't know it intuitively, spiritually on the inside. Can't know it – because "God has prepared it for those who love Him," and then verse 10, "for to us God revealed it through the Spirit." There you go. First, God gave you life, and then He gave you revelation. Let's say it another way. He gave you regeneration, then He gave you revelation.

Well, what good would it be to be regenerated if we didn't have this? If we're capable of understanding the wisdom of God, then we have to have the wisdom of God, right? So the Spirit gave us life, and then He gave us a life-giving word. Why do we love the Bible? Because of regeneration by the Holy Spirit, and because of revelation by the Holy Spirit; He is the author of Holy Scripture. This is the hidden wisdom, the full-orbed gospel which has been revealed, which is known only to use, verse 10, through the Spirit. Then he kind of proves his point by saying, "The Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God." What has the Holy Spirit given us in Scripture? The results of His search through the depths of God – what a thought. What an incredible reality. This book is the depths of God, researched by the omniscient Holy Spirit, and revealed to the writers of Scripture. What a treasure it is. What an inestimable incalculable treasure.

This is the work of the Spirit. Verse 11 is an analogy: "For who among men know the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so, the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God." As it is your spirit that knows you. That's the difference between a man and an animal. An animal doesn't know it exists, you do know you exist. You calculate your thoughts. You think your thoughts. And then you evaluate your thoughts. And as the spirit in you knows you, so the Spirit knows God fully. The Spirit is omniscient. The Spirit is fully God, knows all that God knows, and God knows all that can be known. So we have been given full knowledge of God from the Holy Spirit, necessary for us to have all things that pertain to life and godliness. "The natural man," verse 14, "doesn't accept the things of the Spirit of God, they're foolishness to him. He can't understand them. They're spiritually appraised," and by the way, he's spiritually dead. "But he who is spiritual appraises all things, yet He Himself is appraised by no one." We literally stand in this world – I can take my Bible, and I can evaluate absolutely everything, and no one can gainsay that evaluation. I can tell you exactly how it ought to be. I can tell you what's right, I can tell you what's wrong, based upon

what this book says. And I'm not subject to any judgment beyond this book.

There's one other thing to say here. The reason you love the Bible is because you've been regenerated, because you've been handed a revelation. Third thing, you've been illuminated. This verse 13, "We speak not in words taught by human wisdom but in those taught by the Spirit." Where does the Holy Spirit dwell? Where does the Spirit dwell? In us. First John 2:20 and 27, "You have an anointing from God, so you need not that any man should teach you cause you're taught of God." You have a resident truth teacher, the Holy Spirit. Think about it. The Holy Spirit is your resident teacher. The Holy Spirit who teaches you is the author of the revelation that contains all the truth that He's teaching you, and not only that, the Holy Spirit who is your teacher, the Holy Spirit who revealed the content of His teaching, is the same Holy Spirit who gave you the life to apprehend it all. That's why we live and move in the Spirit.

Why do we love the Bible? 'Cause of the work of regeneration, the work of revelation, and the work of illumination. One of my favorite verses in Scripture is verse 16; I love this verse. Verse 16 borrows from Isaiah 40:13 the statement, "Who has known the mind of the Lord that He will instruct him?" You know, in Isaiah it says who knows the mind of God? Who can know the mind of God? I hear somebody, "Who knows what God thinks?" I do. Do you see the rest of the verse? We have the mind of Christ. Have you ever heard anything more wonderful than that? We have the mind of Christ.

I can walk into any university philosophy class and say, "I'm here to tell you what Christ thinks about everything, and He is the Creator of the universe, without Him was not anything made that was made. He is the Judge of the universe. He is the one who determines every person's destiny. He is the author of all morality, and all relationships, and all that is true, and He will be the Judge of all that is evil. And I'm here to tell you absolutely everything that He thinks. "What?" I tried that on a philosophy class at Cal State Northridge. It blew their minds. "What? Who is this man?" I actually said to them in Dr. Kramer's class – he wanted to have what he thought was a fundamentalist come in to the philosophy class. And I said, "Look, I'm going to tell you the truth about everything, 'cause I know what God thinks about everything." And you just watch these, you know, upper class people squint.

And I said, "However, I have to say that none of you are going to believe anything I say. You're not going to believe it." And one student said, "Whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, what do you mean we're not going to believe it? Why?" I said, "Because you can't." See, and so now they've got a dilemma, because now they want to prove to me that they can believe it. But I actually said, I remember – I just said, "I can tell you everything you need – everything that's important, every truth that you need, I know – I know – because I have the mind of Christ." That's not – you know, some people say, "I hope I have the mind of Christ on this." No, no, no, it's not about what does Jesus want you to do, buy a blue car or a red car? Marry this girl? That guy? That is not the mind of Christ. When it says you have the mind of Christ, you know how He thinks on everything revealed here, right? This is the mind of Christ, you hear? That's why Jesus said in John 15, "I don't merely call you slaves, I call you friends because the Father has revealed all things to you."

There's no place you can't walk in and say, "Folks, I'm here to tell you exactly how God feels about everything – everything." It's sad that we have so much to offer, but so small an audience, huh? But, you know, this is why we love the Word; can't get enough of it. We're the fellowship – we're the extension of the fellowship of the burning heart on the road to Emmaus, remember, and Jesus walked with the disciples, and when He opened the Scriptures and explained everything, it says their

hearts were burning within them. It's the fellowship of the burning heart. Why do we love the Bible? We love the Bible because the Lord gave us life, sovereignly He chose us. He gave us life. He regenerated us. He gave us faith. We believed. We came to life. He gave us a revelation. He put it in our hands. And He put the author of that revelation in our hearts to be the interpreter of it. And then He went even further than that, and He ordained teachers and leaders in the church who, by the power of the Holy Spirit, would be our teachers and our shepherds, and take us deeper into divine truth.

You say, "Well, I thought you were going to talk about this is a humbling gospel." I am going to talk about that. Go back to chapter 1 verse 30. The fact that you are in this position to love the gospel, and love the Scripture, and love the truth, listen to this, in verse 30: "By His doing you are in Christ Jesus." Who did it? Who did it? God did it. "By His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God." God has given you a sovereign gift. It's by His doing that you are in Christ, that you have divine wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption, so that just as it is written, in Jeremiah 9, "let him who boasts" – what? It's a humbling gospel, isn't it? It's a humbling gospel.

Father, we thank You for these wonderful days together and we thank You for Your Word. It is so powerful. It is so precious to us. Thank You for the delights that we've had in the last number of days with these dear friends who have gathered from around the country and around the world. Thank You for our own beloved precious church, for the people who are here who serve you so faithfully here and who love one another and demonstrate the mind of Christ in such wonderful ways, both in the church and outside. Thank You for all that You're doing here. Thank You for the faithful men who have been placed in leadership here and people who, men and women, who have been placed in positions of ministry to serve and to be Christ to the folks who are here. But we know that You come to us in our brothers and sisters and even to be evangelists around the world. We pray, Lord, that You'll continue to cause this church to flourish in its love for You and its love for the Word. Deepen our love and our affection for the Scripture. We thank You that we have the mind of Christ. We know how You think. May we love that truth in such a way that it shows up in our obedience – our obedience. We thank You in Christ's name, and everyone said, "Amen."

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