

Why We Believe While Others Reject

1 Corinthians 1:18-2:16

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It was about 25 years ago in my life that I was asked to write a little book, and the original title of that little book was *Focus on Fact*. You've probably never seen it; it didn't last very long. It came out in another edition with another title a couple of years later, and that title was *Why I Trust The Bible*. It was 1983. And as I was preparing to write that book about why I trust the Bible, which is really what the first one was about as well, I had to answer the question why did I trust the Bible. What was it about the truth of Scripture that made it believable to me? Was I smarter than everybody else? Had I been presented a more powerful set of evidences about Scripture? And certainly such can be presented. Why did I have such immense confidence in the Bible?

I can remember, in my college days, when very little appealed to me other than an athletic event, when I found my greatest joy on a football field, that even then I had complete confidence in the Word of God. I actually couldn't wait to get to seminary. And when I decided that I would give up an athletic career and opportunity on a professional level to go off to seminary, some of my athletes, athletic friends and coaches, couldn't understand the reason. And it really wasn't that I had a drive to preach or a drive to teach. I had this compelling longing to dig into the Word of God and understand what it meant because I was unequivocally committed to its truthfulness.

Where did that come from? Why was I so convinced of the truth of Scripture? I hadn't studied apologetics or defenses of Scripture. I hadn't read a lot of that. There was just, in my heart, a complete commitment to the Word of God. And when I sat down to think about why I trusted the Bible, I looked at some passages of Scripture that came into play. I remembered that Jesus had said to Peter in Matthew 16, "Flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven." And that the reason that Peter knew that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God, was because of divine disclosure, divine revelation.

And then I looked at 1 Corinthians chapter 12 in verse 3 which says, "No man can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Spirit of God." It is reasonable to me to say that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. It is reasonable to me to say Jesus is Lord. But no one can say that, as reasonable as it now appears to me to be, unless the Father discloses it and the Spirit reveals it. I was also drawn to John chapter 6 where Jesus was speaking and many of His disciples, it says, "went away." And He said to those that stayed, "Will you also go away?" And out of the mouth of Peter on behalf of the rest came these words, "To whom shall we go? You and You alone have the words of eternal life." Another massive affirmation that what the Lord Jesus Christ says, what God says is true.

It had been, again, Jesus says given Him of the Father. Jesus even says in that passage, "Have not I chosen you?"

And then I was reminded...and I might ask you to look at this passage...of Romans chapter 8. In

very clear terms we read this in verse 5. “For those who are according to the flesh – ” that is apart from God, apart from spiritual life, spiritually dead, blind, bankrupt – “those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.” You have two mutually exclusive dimensions.

The mind set on the flesh, verse 6, is death. The mind set on the Spirit is life and peace. Verse 7, “The mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God.” And then this, “It does not subject itself to the Law of God for it is not even able to do so. And those who are in the flesh cannot please God.” If you’re in the flesh, you can’t please God. It would please God if you believed the Bible. In fact, that would be at the top of God’s list of things that please Him. It would please God if you believed the gospel. That would also be on the top of the list of things that would please Him. It would please God if you affirmed the deity and the saviorhood of the Lord Jesus Christ. That would please God.

Those three things would be the top of God’s list of things that please Him. And the fact of the matter is, if you are in the flesh, you cannot please God. You can’t please Him at the lowest level, let alone at the pinnacle. So how is it then that I came to have such confidence in the Scripture? I was reminded again of Ephesians chapter 4 which says, essentially, what Romans 8 says in a different way. Verse 17 of Ephesians 4, “I say therefore and affirm together with the Lord that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk in the emptiness of their mind, being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart.”

Now that litany of descriptions is intended to give you the idea that this is an utterly inescapable spot for the unregenerate apart from divine intervention. And so I concluded that by the normal means of human insight and human understanding, I could not have come to this confidence in Scripture. That the only way that I could come to this confidence in Scripture is because God had given it to me as a gift, that God in His sovereignty had given me the will to believe the gospel, to believe in Christ and to embrace the authenticity, authority and veracity of Scripture.

And so, in 1983, when I put out the second edition of the little book called *Why I Trust The Bible*, this is what I wrote. “Unbelievers cannot accept legitimate proof because they are blind to it. The natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God for they are foolishness to him, neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned – ” 1 Corinthians 2:14 – “only as the Holy Spirit does His regenerating work as He opens the mind, tears off the scales of blindness, gives life and plants the understanding of God’s revelation, only then do people believe that the Bible is the Word of God and trust it.”

I know the Bible is true because the Spirit of God has convinced me of it. I wrote that 25-plus years ago. In light of this, I said in the next paragraph...and you know you’re in trouble when you keep quoting yourself. “In light of this I suggest a change in our approach. We have been saying prophecy has been fulfilled, the Bible is scientifically accurate, miracles were performed with eyewitnesses, the biblical message of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ results in a revolutionary change in the lives of persons who believe. Because of all these proofs, we reason the Bible is the Word of God.”

And then I wrote, “Instead, I propose that we declare the Bible is the Word of God, therefore prophecy has been fulfilled, miracles have taken place, scientific statements are accurate and lives have been transformed.” Confidence in Scripture begins with the work of the Spirit. I believe the Bible was written by the God of the universe to reveal Himself to humanity.

I believe the Bible is the only authoritative and absolutely reliable revelation from God with regard to the origin of man, his deliverance, his salvation, the moral and spiritual standards he is to live by, and his ultimate destiny. I also believe that the Bible is true in every detail, even to the very words in the original manuscripts. God was the author. And I concluded with this, "The Spirit has led me to this supportable confidence."

Now for me that was a really significant discovery. And, later in my life, I was exposed to some of the writing of a well-known theologian named John Calvin. And being curious about what he believed in regard to this same issue, I began to discover some very interesting things. Listen to John Calvin. "The Scriptures alone exist as the means by which God has been pleased to consign His truth to perpetual remembrance. The full authority, which they obtain with the faithful, proceeds from no other consideration than that they are persuaded that they, the words of Scripture, proceeded from heaven as if God had been heard giving utterance to them." This he says in his *Institutes*.

He further says, "The Scriptures themselves manifest plainly that God is the speaker. We are never established in the faith of this doctrine until we are indubitably persuaded that God is the author. Being illuminated therefore by Him – " that is the Holy Spirit – "we no longer believe either on our own judgment or that of others that Scripture is from God, but in a way that surpasses human judgment we are perfectly assured that it has come to us by the ministry of men from the very mouth of God. We feel the firmest conviction that we hold an invincible truth, this by the Holy Spirit."

Well Calvin got it right. We're not surprised, are we? William Niesel said that Calvin considers the word of the Bible, quote, "As a dead and ineffectual thing for us if it is not divinely vivified – " given life – "and so soon as it is separated from Him – " that is, Christ – "it becomes a dead body of letters without soul." He understood that you only believe the Scripture when the Spirit of God gifts you with that faith and confidence. Confident trust in the Word of God and the Scripture is then not the result of rational arguments and the work of human intellect and reason or emotion. It is the work of the Spirit in the heart.

Calvin further says, "For as God alone is a sufficient witness to Himself in His own Word, so also the Word will never gain credit in the hearts of men until it is sealed by the internal testimony of the Spirit. It is necessary, therefore, that the same Spirit who spoke by the mouth of the prophets penetrate into our hearts in order that He might persuade us that they faithfully delivered what had been divinely entrusted to them." So he says, "Let it remain then a fixed truth that those whom the Spirit inwardly teaches firmly acquiesce to the Scripture." Our confidence in the Word of God comes from the Spirit of God. It is a component of the sovereign gift of regeneration.

Traditional approaches have been to try to prove the Bible to unregenerate people by amassing all kinds of evidences that they can process through their fallen intellects in the futility of their mental function and the ignorance that is in them and the darkness of their mind and the hardness of their heart and the callousness and sensuality of their soul. We can amass all the prophetic evidences, scientific evidence, miraculous evidence, historical archeological evidence, the evidences of transformed lives.

And in the end, while certainly all of those are reasonable and a true representation of Scripture, they cannot take the scales off the blind eyes; they cannot give life to the dead soul. The Scripture tells us

how this works in one of the great texts in the Scripture. Open your Bible to 1 Corinthians chapter 1. There is too much here for me to say in one message. And since I'm not going to be here to say it in two, I'm going to give you the condensed version of this. I do well to cover a verse, let alone two chapters or parts of two chapters.

But I do want you to look, beginning in chapter 1, at verse 18 and running through chapter 2. And we'll touch lightly on these truths while maintaining the flow of thought and the main point. The theme of the section starting in chapter 1 and verse 18 and running to the end of chapter 2 is divine wisdom, divine wisdom. The word "wise" or "wisdom" appears 20 times or so here, contrasted with "foolishness," which appears about a half a dozen times.

This is about divine wisdom. And the whole section explains why people reject the wisdom of God and why other people accept the wisdom of God; why people reject the Scripture, the gospel, the cross and other people accept the Scripture, the gospel and the cross. In fact, there are some phrases here, "the wisdom of God," "the word of the cross," and even "the testimony of God." But whether you're talking about the wisdom of God, the word of the cross, or the testimony of God, you're talking about the divine revelation which is inscripturated. This is the theme.

Now the simple way to break this up is to break it up into two sections which overlap and recycle and restate things. But, nonetheless, two sections are somewhat discernable. Section number one, why non-Christians reject the Bible. Section number two, why Christians accept the Bible. Why non-Christians reject the Bible and why Christians accept the Bible. And I will tell you at the outset, nothing is said about evidences, nothing is said about human reason, nothing is said about how to manipulate people's will or how to move their emotions. This is not about evidences. This is not about reason. This is not about emotion. This is about condition. This is about the condition of a non-Christian and the condition of a Christian.

Let's look, first of all, at why non-Christians do not believe the Bible. And I'll give you five reasons, which are laid out for us in the opening section. First of all, the message is unreasonable. That's the first cause for them to disbelieve. It is unreasonable. Verse 18, "The Word of the cross –" or the testimony of God, or the Word of God's wisdom. That is to say the revelation of God inscripturated – "is to those who are perishing –" that is their condition – "foolishness." It is foolishness."

In a somewhat sarcastic way, that idea is repeated in verse 21, "God was well pleased through the foolishness of the message." Verse 23 says to the Gentiles, "It is foolishness." And then in another sarcastic way in verse 25, "The foolishness of God is actually wiser than men." And so, clearly, there is this idea that the revelation of God in Scripture is foolish. It is...the word is moron, moronic, stupid, pointless, unsuitable to human reason. They treat the Word of God with contempt and disdain. And I won't go into all the details about that, but a crucified God was ridiculous to the Gentiles and, equally, if not more ridiculous to the Jews. Salvation by faith in a crucified God was even more ridiculous. The whole thing was frankly unreasonable.

Secondly, non-Christians do not believe the Bible not only because the message is unreasonable but because the reality is unattainable. You heard a couple of times in the baptisms tonight the people say, "I knew that Jesus died, but I couldn't connect why or how that had anything to do with my life." Or you heard someone say, "I grew up in the church and had all these disconnected stories in my mind, and I wasn't sure how it all came together." And that's essentially the idea here. It just doesn't make sense to those who are perishing.

Verse 19, "It is written, 'I will destroy the wisdom of the mind 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 – " that is to say God made it this way – "the world through its wisdom did not come to know God." In the fall, God cast the human race into a condition in which it is impossible by means of human wisdom to come to know God. You can't get there on your own.

And God designed it that way. "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise – " He says – "I will destroy the cleverness of the clever. I will turn the wisdom of this world in the direction of folly. I will because it pleases Me cause that no man, no matter how worldly wise, can through that worldly wisdom come to know Me." In verse 19 he's quoting from Isaiah 29:14, from the Septuagint, the Greek edition of that. Isaiah had said at that time, Isaiah 29, that when Sennacherib was threatening Judah, threatening to attack and pillage and plunder Judah, Isaiah said, "Deliverance will come from God, but it will not come by the wisdom of the leaders, it will not come by the wisdom of the sages, their cunning secretive treachery that was being laid against Judah would perish not by human ingenuity but because of the power of God."

God would step in and deliver His people. The wisdom of the wise couldn't save them. The cleverness of the clever couldn't do it. Only God could do it. And as if to say, "So where is the wise man when you need him? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Line them all up, line the...the literate, the elite, the intellectuals, the philosophers." And by the way, verse 20 alludes both to Isaiah 19:12, and Isaiah 33:18 and the supposed wise counselors of Egypt who were turned into absolute fools in the 19th chapter of Isaiah.

And then the scribes of the Assyrians, who were all ready to record the record of the spoils they were going to get when they came in, and all of a sudden they all looked like fools because God intervened. Where are the disputers, the debaters, the suzetetes...they're the philosophy debaters? Line them all up. And it pleases God by means of all their intellects and all their wisdom and all their erudition, they cannot come to know Him. In the wisdom of God, God made it impossible for men and women to come to know Him on their own. You cannot get there from here unaided. You cannot get to a confidence in the Word of God, belief in the message or word of the cross, the word of divine testimony. So, people don't believe because it is foolish, unreasonable, because it is unattainable.

Thirdly, because it is frankly unbelievable, or I guess you could say ridiculous. Verse 22, "They – " the Jews – "seek for signs. The Greeks for wisdom." The Jews were looking for signs. You say, "Wait a minute. Jesus gave them signs and signs and signs and signs." Yeah, but they wanted the big sign. Knock off the Romans, set up the Kingdom, reign in fulfillment of the Abrahamic and Davidic Covenant. And when He started talking about His death, He went to the cross, it was over. Crucifixion came to the Lord Jesus because He condemned their hypocritical religion, because He didn't display His power against the Romans and fulfill their own messianic scheme. And then even on the cross they said, "Why don't You come down off the cross?" Maybe there was a last hope that He would do the sign that they were looking for. But the crucifixion of God? The crucifixion of the Messiah by the Romans? Unthinkable.

On the other hand, the Greeks, they sought wisdom. And what does that mean? They sought intricate, complicated, profound, complex philosophies with fancy words and esoteric concepts. And they laughed at the simplicity of the gospel and the unbelievable idea that a crucified God was to be

worshiped. That's why there is to this day a stone in Rome that shows a man bowing down to a jackass. And it's a reflection of an ancient view of Christianity and it says, *Alexamenos* worships his god." And the interesting thing about it is, jackass is on a cross. Who would worship a jackass on a cross? It is frankly unbelievable.

Number four, its people are unremarkable. Its people are unremarkable. The Jews wanted a sign; the Greeks wanted wisdom. Paul preached Christ crucified. The Jews stumbled over it. The Gentiles said it was foolish. Verse 26 doesn't help. "Consider your calling, brethren, there were not many wise, according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble." Bottom line here is we're not too impressive. They weren't then and we aren't now. The majority of believers have always been unremarkable. They have always been unimpressive to the world, especially to the world of elite minds who...who treat us with contempt.

We're not the smartest and we're not the noblest. In fact, verse 27, "God has chosen the foolish to shame the wise. He has chosen the weak to shame the strong. He has chosen the base and the despised and He has chosen the things that are not." It just keeps getting lower and lower and lower. He chose not the wise. He chose not the noble. Not wise, not the intellectual elite, not the mighty, not the great, the influential, the movers, the shakers, the powerful, not the noble.

It's actually a Greek word that means wellborn, highborn, socially ranked. "But He's chosen foolish, weak, base, *agenēs*, the no births, the nobodies, the no-names, the John Does, the insignificant, and the despised." And then it goes down even lower than that. "The things that are not –" the present participle of *eimi*, the non-existent ones He's chosen. That, by the way, that last statement that Paul uses, the things that are not, in verse 28, is *the* most contemptible expression in the Greek language to demean another person, to treat them as if they did not even exist. So, they don't believe. And the fact that we are such an unremarkable lot adds to their resistance.

And then a fifth. Not only are the people of this book unremarkable, but the preachers are unfashionable. And I could have thought of a lot of words for that. Unfashionable. Come in to chapter 2, "When I came to you, brethren, I didn't come with superiority of speech or of wisdom." And that was a problem because they loved this esoteric kind of fancy, complicated, mazelike teaching that brought in all kinds of complexity and profundity and titillated their minds. "I didn't come with superiority of speech, no tricks of wisdom. I'm determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified." There again is this repulsive, unbelievable, simplistic message.

Furthermore, he didn't help his cause any by his own persona. You remember the Corinthians said about him his person was frankly contemptible. And his speech was unimpressive. He was with you in weakness, fear, much trembling. My message, my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom but in demonstration of the Spirit and power. So you have a pretty...a pretty comprehensive look at why people don't believe. You start with the fact that they can't, that they don't have the capability, that they are void of the life of God. They can't escape the natural. They can't escape being in the flesh. And one who is in the flesh minds only the things of the flesh. And he cannot know the things of the Spirit, they are unknowable to him.

And you add the fact that all of these give reason to reject, and you understand something of the dilemma of the unregenerate. The message itself was offensive, unreasonable, unbelievable, incomprehensible. The people were the lowly, and the preachers were the weak and the unimpressive and the fearful and the trembling. And you add the fallen condition, natural darkness,

satanic blinding and divine judgment. And non-believers cannot on their own believe the truth.

So the search for God and the search for Christ and the search for the truth, and the search to discern whether the Bible is really true in what it's saying, cannot begin and end with human reason. That's why every time you see one of these deals on television, "The Search for the Real Jesus," "The Search for the Truth," it always ends up in error. Fallen mind can't get there on its own. That's why non-Christians don't believe the Bible.

Now let's ask the second question. Why do Christians believe the Bible? In spite of all of this, go to verse 6 in chapter 2. We'll spend a few minutes on this latter part. "Yet –" that's a key word there, you ought to circle it or underline it – "Yet in spite of what the world thinks about this, yet we do speak wisdom among those who are *teleios*; *teleiois* –" actually, plural. "Among those who are *teleiois* –" What is that? Well, who have been made complete. It's just a way to describe believers. We speak wisdom, understood, comprehended, embraced and believed among those who have been made complete. We have come to Christ. "We have come to the one –" Paul says to the Colossians – "in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."

It isn't that we're more intelligent. It isn't that we have been subjected to greater evidences. It is that we have been made complete in Him. Paul says it, "You are complete in Him." And being made complete or mature in Him, you have been given with that divine work of regeneration and conversion and transformation, not only confidence in Jesus Christ and confidence in the true and loving God...living God, but confidence in the Word of God. And so, verse 6 says, "We do speak wisdom." Paul saying, "We" in an apostolic plural. "We do speak wisdom among those who are mature, a wisdom, however, not of this age nor of the rulers of this age."

This is a wisdom that I've just been telling you is unknown to the best of this world's minds, the greatest of this world's leaders. "We speak –" verse 7 – "God's wisdom in a mystery, the hidden wisdom." How in the world did we get to know it? Oh, read the rest of the line. "Which God –" what's that next word? – "predestined before the ages to our glory." Why do I understand the Bible? Because God what? Predestined me to understand it for my own future glory. You say, "Oh, do you believe in predestination? I believe in the Bible and the Bible tells me that the reason I understand the wisdom of God is because God predestined me to eternal glory, and through regeneration and conversion gave me faith in His Son, in the gospel and in His Word.

Does that mean that I'm now in a situation where I believe the Bible, even though it's not reasonable? Oh no. Everything in it is reasonable. Its prophecies are fulfilled. Its miracles are true and attested to. It is scientifically flawless and accurate. Its history and archeology is verifiable down to the smallest detail. But it's not that that convinces my natural reason. It is that because God has given me faith in His Word that I now see all that to be true. Another way to view it, at this point, might be to look at 1 John chapter 2. 1 John chapter 2, just to give you a little break from the text we're in.

Sometimes people hang around the church for a while, they don't stay. Verse 19 describes them, "They went out from us," that's pretty true in almost everybody's religious experience, Christian experience. "They went out from us." "Yeah, you know, so-and-so used to come here, sang in the choir, served here and there, showed up at church. Don't see them anymore, what happened?" "Well they went out from us, but they were not really of us, for if they had been of us they would have remained with us, but they went out in order that it might be shown they are all not of us." They went

out, they left and it proves they never really belonged to begin with.

“But – ” verse 20, love this – “you have an anointing from the Holy One and you all know.” What do you know? You know what he says in the next verse. “I’ve not written to you because you do not know the truth but because you know it and no lie is of the truth.” That means no lie leads you astray. No lie leads you into apostasy. Why? You know the truth. Why do you know the truth? You have an anointing from God. What is that anointing? Or better, who is that anointing? The Holy Spirit.

I believe the Bible because God gave me confidence in the Word of God as a part of my salvation and regeneration. I stay with the truth. I believe the truth. I embrace the truth. I continue with the truth. I stay involved with the truth because the Spirit of God has shown me what the truth is and I know a lie when I see one. At the end of that, or near the end of that same chapter, verse 27, “As for you, the anointing which you received from Him abides in you.” Wow. This is our security, the ever-present indwelling resident Holy Spirit who is our anchor to the truth. He abides in you and you have no need for anyone to teach you. “But as His anointing teaches you about all things and is true and is not a lie and just as it has taught you, you abide in Him.”

That is just a profound subject to understand. When you were saved you came to confidence in the Word of God and that’s where you stay. That’s where you stay. And the people who hang around a while and go away, give evidence of the fact that they never really belonged and they never had the Spirit of God. I believe the Bible because God gave me the gift of faith in His Son and faith in His gospel and faith in His Word. I continue to... that for my justification. I believe the Bible for my sanctification, because the Spirit of God who abides in me continues to lead me into truth and away from error. That’s why I believe the Bible.

Now, I understand, as verse 6 says, that this is different than the wisdom of this age, the wisdom of the rulers of this age, the top minds. All of that stuff is *katargeō*. All of it is being rendered ineffective. All of it is impotent. All of it leads nowhere. All of it is really foolish, really foolish. But I believe and you believe because God predestined before the ages that we would believe unto glory. And we believe a wisdom, verse 8 says, “which none of the rulers of this age has understood, none of them. If they had, they wouldn’t have crucified the Lord of glory,” and they wouldn’t continue to reject the Lord of glory who was crucified.

He sums it up in verse 9 by saying this, a very familiar verse by the way, drawn out of a couple of passages that are being alluded here and Isaiah. “Things which eye has not seen, and ear has not heard, and which have not entered the heart of man, all that God has prepared for those who love Him.” We know all that God has for us. We know that. We know it by divine revelation. It can’t be known any other way. Eye can’t see it and ear can’t hear it. And the mind which is in view in the heart can’t conceive of it.

God’s truth regarding salvation, God’s truth regarding spiritual and eternal life is unheard, unseen, unthought. It cannot be known by empiricism; it cannot be known by rationalism. It can only be known by divine revelation. In John 8 Jesus said this, and He’s talking to the recalcitrant Pharisees. Jesus said to them in verse 42, John 8, “If you...if God were your Father, you would love Me.” Wow! “But since God’s not your Father, you don’t love Me, for I proceeded forth and have come from God.” I’m not even come on My own initiative, but He has sent Me. Listen to this, “Why do you not understand what I’m saying?”

Why don't people understand? "It's because you cannot hear My word because you are of your father, the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, does not stand in the truth because there's no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature for he's a liar and the father of lies, but because I speak the truth, you do not believe Me." You can't. And He sums it up in verse 47, well, in verse 46. "If I speak the truth, why do you not believe Me?" Why don't people believe the truth? "He who is of God hears the words of God. For this reason you do not hear them because you are not of God." Pretty clear, isn't it? Who believes the Bible? Those who are God's. It is a divine work.

Go back to 1 Corinthians chapter 2 and we'll just wrap it up at verse 10 with a few comments thrown in. First Corinthians 2:10. "For to us –" oh, this is such a great point of summary. "For to us God revealed them." Them? What do you mean? "The things that God has prepared for those that love Him, the things concerning salvation, spiritual and eternal life, the Kingdom." That is to say all of the wisdom of God, all of the word of the cross, all of the word of God's testimony, all that truth that is inscripturated. To us, God revealed them through the Spirit. That is the critical thing to understand. We believe because God chose, God predestined us to know so that one day we would come to eternal glory.

In drawing this to some kind of conclusion that will grip your soul, let's just take that idea that we know because God chose to show us, to reveal to us, to regenerate us, to give us life, to take the scales of blindness off, to awaken our hearts, to unfold the mystery, to bring the truth that was hidden out and reveal it to us, take that as the background and reread starting in verse 24. "To those who are the called." Anytime you ever see that term, "the called," or "calling" in the epistles in the New Testament is the effectual call to salvation.

We are the called, that is called out of darkness into light, called out of death into life. In verse 26 he says it again, "Consider your calling," the divine call, the vivification, the life-giving call, regeneration. And why us? Verse 27, "God has chosen, God has chosen." Verse 28, "God has chosen." Verse 30, "But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus." Why are you in Christ Jesus? Because you saw how clearly it should be apprehended and believed because you went through the evidences, because your mind ascended to it. You are in Christ Jesus by His doing. He predestined, He revealed because He chose, and whom He chose He called. And as Paul says in Romans 8, "Whom He called He justified and whom He justifies He glorifies."

So, back to verse 30, "By His doing you are in Christ Jesus, by His doing you believe, by His doing you embrace the Word of God in your justification and your sanctification. By His doing you are in Christ Jesus –" listen – "who became to us wisdom from God." By His doing that we are in Christ. And then Christ became to us — by His presence and His power and His Spirit and His Word — wisdom from God and righteousness and sanctification and redemption.

Why did God do it this way? Why did God do it this way? Verse 29, "That no man should –" What? – "boast before God." Verse 31, "The just as it is written, let him who boasts boast in the Lord." And so we are stunned by the confidence that we have in the Word of God. And when somebody says, "Where in the world does it come from?" You can say it is by His doing because He placed us in Christ and Christ became to us the wisdom of God. And it is our love for God through Christ that gives us confidence in His Word, and we believe the truth because we are of God.

Martin Luther put it this way, “Man is like a pillar of salt, like Lot’s wife, yea like a log, or a stone, like a lifeless statue which uses neither eyes nor mouth, neither sense nor heart, until he is enlightened, converted and regenerated by the Holy Spirit.” So I didn’t invent this. They were reading the same Bible I’m reading and the same one you’re reading. You believe the Bible, dear one, and you live in the light of its glorious truths, your life is enraptured by its wonders because God for His own glory was well pleased to predestine you and to choose you and to justify you and to sanctify you through His Word. And when He gave you Christ, He gave you, in Christ, His wisdom for in Him are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. I cannot separate my love for Christ from my love for the Word.

At the end, skipping down to verse 16, the last statement, “We have the mind of Christ.” What a statement. What a statement. In having confidence in the Word of God, we have access to the mind of Christ. Grab that? It’s no mystery to me how God thinks or what He desires. All that God wants me to know, He’s put here. I have here the mind of Christ, and I know how Christ thinks and what He wills and what pleases Him and what He loves and what He hates and what He commands and what He forbids. I understand it all because He has enabled me to understand it. And I live my life embracing the wonder of such profound inexplicable grace on my behalf as this is. Let’s bow in prayer.

Our Father, we know that the power of evangelism for justification is not found in clever methods or music or culturally crafted entertainment, but in the Bible. The power for edification, in sanctification is also found in the Bible. We are to preach the Scripture, the word of the cross, the wisdom of God, the testimony of God. We are to present it, proclaim it, defend it, for this is the only hope and the only means by which you will justify and sanctify Your people. Always we must use the Scripture, not so that the non-Christian can see the reasonableness of it but so that You may awaken the heart of Your own by the divine miracle of grace through the Word.

We thank You, Father, that a life time of stud...of study will prove the Scripture is reasonable, it is attainable, understandable, believable, stands every test. And we know that because You have given us life and understanding. We thank You that You heard the prayer of Psalm 119:18, “Open my eyes that I may see wondrous things out of Thy Law.” Lord, that prayer has been answered for us and we praise You and the wonders never cease. Use us, Lord, as instruments in the proclamation of Your truth to awaken sinners and to sanctify saints. Thank You for the privilege of being so used in Christ’s name. Amen.

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