CRAWFORD BIBLE COMMENTARY

BIBLE STUDY

1 Corinthians Chapter 2 — The Spirit Reveals the Wisdom of God

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible

Introduction

1 Corinthians Chapter 2 continues the thought Paul began in Chapter 1.

In Chapter 1, Paul showed that the message of the cross looks foolish to the world but is the power and wisdom of God.

Now he explains two more things.

First, how he preached that message when he came to Corinth.

Second, how anyone can ever understand it.

Paul had come to Corinth from Athens, the most famous center of philosophy in the ancient world.

Corinth loved polished speakers and impressive arguments.

But Paul did not try to compete with them.

He came in weakness.

He came with fear and trembling.

And he made one decision:

To know nothing among them except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

Why?

So that their faith would rest on God's power, not on human wisdom.

Then Paul surprises his readers.

He says the gospel **is** wisdom.

But it is not the wisdom of this age.

It is God's hidden wisdom, planned before time began.

The rulers of this world did not understand it.

If they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

How then does anyone come to understand it?

Not by human intelligence.

Not by eye, ear, or imagination.

God reveals it by His Spirit.

The Spirit knows the deep things of God.

The Spirit gives believers understanding.

The Spirit teaches the words that explain spiritual truth.

And so, Paul says, believers have something the world can never produce on its own:

The mind of Christ.

The chapter moves through three movements:

- Preaching Christ Crucified, Not Human Wisdom (verses 1–5).
- God's Hidden Wisdom (verses 6–9).
- The Spirit Reveals All Things (verses 10–16).

The central truth of 1 Corinthians 2 is:

True faith rests on God's power, not human wisdom, because the wisdom of God in Christ crucified can only be known as the Holy Spirit reveals it to those who belong to Him.

I. NOT WITH ELOQUENCE

1 Corinthians 2:1 — "When I Came to You"

"And when I came to you, brothers and sisters, I did not come with eloquence or human wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God."

Paul takes the Corinthians back to the beginning.

He reminds them of the day he first arrived in their city.

He did not arrive as a celebrity speaker.

He did not come with **eloquence**, the polished speaking style that impressed Greek audiences.

He did not come with **human wisdom**, the clever arguments of the philosophers.

Instead, he came to proclaim **"the testimony about God."**

A testimony is a witness.

A witness does not invent the message.

A witness tells what is true.

Paul saw himself as a witness to what God had done in Jesus Christ.

Cross References

1 Corinthians 1:17

> Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the good news—and not with clever speech, so that the cross of Christ would not lose its power.

2 Corinthians 10:10

> Some people say, “His letters are strong and forceful, but in person he is weak, and his speaking is nothing special.”

Colossians 2:4

> I am telling you this so that no one will fool you with arguments that only sound convincing.

Spiritual Principle

God's messenger is a witness, not a performer.

The goal is not to impress people.

The goal is to tell them the truth about God.

Application

You do not need to be a gifted speaker to share the gospel.

You only need to be a faithful witness.

II. JESUS CHRIST AND HIM CRUCIFIED

1 Corinthians 2:2 — Paul's Great Resolve

“For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.”

This is one of the most important statements Paul ever made about his ministry.

He **resolved**.

It was a deliberate decision.

Paul was a highly educated man.

He knew the Scriptures deeply.

He could quote Greek poets.

He could debate with philosophers.

But when he came to Corinth, he made up his mind that one subject would fill his preaching:

Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

This does not mean Paul never taught anything else.

It means that everything he taught flowed from the cross and led back to the cross.

The cross was not one topic among many.

It was the center of everything.

Cross References

Galatians 6:14

> But I will never brag about anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. Through the cross the world has been crucified to me, and I have been crucified to the world.

Philippians 3:8

> More than that, I now count everything as loss compared to the far greater value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For His sake I have lost everything, and I think of it all as garbage, so that I may gain Christ.

1 Corinthians 1:23

> But we preach Christ crucified. This message offends the Jews and sounds foolish to the Gentiles.

Spiritual Principle

The cross is not the beginning of the Christian message that we move past; it is the center we never leave.

Key Truth

A church can drift from the cross while still talking about many good things.

Faithful ministry keeps Christ crucified at the center.

III. IN WEAKNESS AND FEAR

1 Corinthians 2:3 — “With Great Fear and Trembling”

“I came to you in weakness, with great fear and trembling.”

This is an honest confession.

The great apostle Paul was afraid.

He came to Corinth **“in weakness.”**

He had just been beaten and jailed in Philippi.

He had been driven out of Thessalonica and Berea.

He had seen only a small response in Athens.

Now he walked into one of the proudest and most immoral cities in the empire.

He came **“with great fear and trembling.”**

God knew how Paul felt.

In a vision one night, the Lord told him not to be afraid and to keep on speaking, because the Lord was with him and had many people in that city.

Paul's weakness did not stop the work.

It made room for God's strength.

Cross References

2 Corinthians 10:1

> I, Paul, appeal to you by the gentleness and kindness of Christ—I who am said to be timid when I am face to face with you, but bold toward you when I am away.

Acts 18:9

> One night the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision: “Don't be afraid. Keep on speaking, and don't stay silent.”

2 Corinthians 12:9

> But He told me, “My grace is all you need, because My power works best in weakness.” So I will gladly brag even more about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power can rest on me.

Spiritual Principle

Fear does not disqualify a servant of God; it drives him to depend on God.

Application

Do not wait until you feel strong to obey God.

Many of God's greatest works began with a servant who was trembling.

IV. A DEMONSTRATION OF THE SPIRIT'S POWER

1 Corinthians 2:4 — Not Persuasive Words

“My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power,”

Paul describes both his **message** and his **preaching**.

The content and the delivery.

Neither depended on **“wise and persuasive words.”**

Paul did not use clever tricks of speech to manipulate his hearers.

Instead, his preaching came with **“a demonstration of the Spirit's power.”**

The word **demonstration** means proof.

The proof that Paul's message was true was not his skill.

It was what the Holy Spirit did.

Hearts were changed.

Idol worshipers turned to God.

Immoral people were made clean.

A church was born in the middle of Corinth.

Only the Spirit of God could do that.

Cross References

1 Thessalonians 1:5

> Our good news came to you not only in words, but also with power, with the Holy Spirit, and with deep confidence. You know how we lived among you for your benefit.

1 Corinthians 4:20

> The kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power.

2 Corinthians 4:7

> We have this treasure in clay jars to show that this amazing power comes from God and not from us.

Spiritual Principle

The Holy Spirit, not human skill, makes preaching effective.

Key Truth

Persuasive words can move people for a moment.

The Spirit of God can change people forever.

V. FAITH RESTING ON GOD'S POWER

1 Corinthians 2:5 — The Reason Behind Paul's Method

“so that your faith might not rest on human wisdom, but on God's power.”

Here is why Paul preached the way he did.

He was thinking about the foundation of their faith.

If Paul had won them with clever arguments, their faith would rest on Paul.

A better speaker could come along and win them away.

A smarter argument could knock their faith down.

But faith that rests on **God's power** cannot be moved by the next impressive voice.

Paul wanted their faith built on a foundation that would last.

This speaks directly to the problem in Corinth.

They were dividing over preachers.

Paul reminds them that their faith was never supposed to rest on any preacher at all.

Cross References

2 Corinthians 4:7

> We have this treasure in clay jars to show that this amazing power comes from God and not from us.

Romans 1:16

> I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is God's power to save everyone who believes—first the Jew, and also the Gentile.

Ephesians 3:20

> Now to Him who is able to do far more than anything we ask or imagine, by His power that is at work in us—

Spiritual Principle

Faith is only as strong as what it rests on.

Application

Ask yourself: Does my faith rest on a person, a feeling, or an argument?

Or does it rest on the power of God?

VI. WISDOM AMONG THE MATURE

1 Corinthians 2:6 — Not the Wisdom of This Age

“Yet we do speak a wisdom among the mature, but not the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing.”

Paul does not want anyone to think the gospel is simple-minded.

He says, **“We do speak a wisdom.”**

The gospel is deep.

It is the wisest message ever spoken.

But it is spoken **“among the mature.”**

The word **mature** means complete or grown up.

Here it describes believers who have received the Spirit and are growing in Christ.

This wisdom is **“not the wisdom of this age.”**

It does not come from the philosophers, the politicians, or the powerful.

And Paul says the rulers of this age are **“coming to nothing.”**

Their power is temporary.

Their wisdom is fading.

Every human empire passes away.

God's wisdom remains.

Cross References

Philippians 3:15

> All of us who are mature should think this way. And if you see some things differently, God will make that clear to you as well.

Hebrews 5:14

> But solid food is for the mature, who by constant practice have trained themselves to tell the difference between good and evil.

1 Corinthians 3:1

> Brothers and sisters, I could not speak to you as spiritual people. I had to speak to you as people still living by worldly ways—as babies in Christ.

Spiritual Principle

The gospel is simple enough for a child to believe and deep enough to fill a lifetime of study.

Spiritual Warning

The Corinthians thought they were mature.

In the next chapter Paul tells them they were still acting like babies.

True maturity is shown by humility and love, not by pride in knowledge.

VII. GOD'S HIDDEN WISDOM

1 Corinthians 2:7 — A Mystery Destined for Our Glory

“No, we declare God's wisdom, a mystery that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began.”

Paul now describes this wisdom.

It is **“God's wisdom.”**

It is **“a mystery.”**

In the Bible, a mystery is not a puzzle that clever people solve.

It is a truth that was once hidden and can only be known when God reveals it.

This wisdom was planned **“before time began.”**

The cross was not a last-minute rescue plan.

God planned it before the world was made.

And notice the goal:

“For our glory.”

God planned salvation so that sinners would one day share in His glory.

The cross that looked like shame was designed to lead us to glory.

Cross References

Ephesians 3:9

> and to make clear to everyone how God's secret plan works—the plan that God, who created all things, kept hidden for ages.

Colossians 1:26

> This is the secret that was hidden for ages and generations, but now it has been made known to His holy people.

Romans 16:25

> Now to God, who is able to make you strong by my good news and the preaching about Jesus Christ, which reveals the secret that was kept hidden for long ages—

Spiritual Principle

Salvation was God's plan before it was our need.

Key Truth

Before you were born, before the world was made, God planned to bring His people to glory through Christ.

VIII. THE LORD OF GLORY CRUCIFIED

1 Corinthians 2:8 — The Rulers Did Not Understand

“None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.”

The rulers of this age had power.

They had position.

They had education.

But they did not understand God's wisdom.

The religious leaders in Jerusalem rejected Jesus.

Herod mocked Him.

Pilate, the Roman governor, handed Him over to be crucified.

They thought they were getting rid of a troublemaker.

They did not realize they were crucifying **“the Lord of glory.”**

This is one of the highest titles in Scripture.

Glory belongs to God alone.

Paul calls the crucified Jesus the Lord of glory.

The man on the cross was God in human flesh.

And the very act the rulers used to destroy Him became the means God used to save the world.

Cross References

Acts 3:17

> Now, brothers, I know that you acted without understanding, and so did your leaders.

Luke 23:34

> Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, because they do not know what they are doing.”

James 2:1

> My brothers and sisters, you believe in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ, so do not treat some people better than others.

Spiritual Principle

Worldly power cannot recognize heavenly glory without God's help.

Key Truth

The rulers thought the cross was their victory.

It was God's.

IX. WHAT NO EYE HAS SEEN

1 Corinthians 2:9 — Prepared for Those Who Love Him

“However, as it is written: “What no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, and what no human mind has conceived— the things God has prepared for those who love him.””

Paul draws on the words of Isaiah.

Notice the three ways people try to gain knowledge:

The eye—what we see.

The ear—what we hear.

The mind—what we can imagine.

None of these could discover God's plan.

Observation could not find it.

Tradition could not pass it on.

Imagination could not invent it.

This verse is often quoted at funerals to describe heaven.

And it certainly includes the glory to come.

But in context, Paul is speaking about the gospel itself.

God's plan of salvation through a crucified Messiah was beyond anything humans could have dreamed up.

And it was prepared **“for those who love him.”**

Cross References

Isaiah 64:4

> From ancient times no one has heard, no ear has listened, and no eye has seen any God besides You, who acts for those who wait for Him.

Isaiah 65:17

> Look, I am creating new heavens and a new earth. The old things will not be remembered or come to mind.

Matthew 13:17

> I tell you the truth, many prophets and godly people longed to see what you are seeing, but they did not see it. They longed to hear what you are hearing, but they did not hear it.

Spiritual Principle

God's plans for His people are greater than anything they could ever imagine.

Application

When life is hard, remember that God has prepared things for those who love Him that the human mind cannot even picture.

X. REVEALED BY THE SPIRIT

1 Corinthians 2:10 — The Deep Things of God

“But God has revealed them to us by his Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God.”

Here is the great turning point.

No eye saw it.

No ear heard it.

No mind imagined it.

“But God has revealed them to us by his Spirit.”

What humans could never discover, God has made known.

And He did it through the Holy Spirit.

Paul says the Spirit **“searches all things.”**

This does not mean the Spirit is looking for information He lacks.

It means the Spirit knows everything completely, even **“the deep things of God.”**

Only someone who is fully God could know the depths of God.

This verse is a strong testimony to the deity of the Holy Spirit.

Cross References

Romans 8:27

> And God, who searches our hearts, knows what the Spirit is thinking, because the Spirit prays for God's people in line with God's will.

John 16:13

> When the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on His own. He will tell you what He hears, and He will show you what is still to come.

Daniel 2:22

> He reveals deep and hidden things. He knows what is in the darkness, and light lives with Him.

Spiritual Principle

We do not find God by searching upward; God makes Himself known by revealing Himself to us.

Key Truth

Christianity is not humanity's search for God.

It is God's revelation of Himself.

XI. ONLY THE SPIRIT KNOWS THE MIND OF GOD

1 Corinthians 2:11 — An Illustration from the Human Heart

“For who knows a person's thoughts except their own spirit within them? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.”

Paul gives a simple illustration.

No one can fully know what you are thinking unless you tell them.

Others can guess.

They can watch your face.

But only your own spirit truly knows your thoughts.

In the same way, only the Spirit of God truly knows the thoughts of God.

Human beings cannot read God's mind.

If we are going to know God's thoughts, God must tell us.

And He does, through His Spirit.

Cross References

Proverbs 20:27

> A person's spirit is the LORD's lamp, shining light into the deepest parts of who they are.

Romans 11:34

> Who has ever known the mind of the Lord? Who has ever been His adviser?

Jeremiah 17:10

> I, the LORD, search the heart and test the mind. I give each person what their actions deserve.

Spiritual Principle

Knowing God depends on God making Himself known.

Application

Come to the Bible humbly.

Ask the Spirit who knows God's thoughts to help you understand them.

XII. THE SPIRIT WHO IS FROM GOD

1 Corinthians 2:12 — Understanding What God Has Given

“What we have received is not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may understand what God has freely given us.”

Paul contrasts two spirits.

The spirit of the world is the attitude and way of thinking of a world that does not know God.

It values pride, status, cleverness, and self.

The Spirit who is from God is the Holy Spirit Himself.

Every believer has received Him.

And Paul tells us why:

“So that we may understand what God has freely given us.”

God does not only give us salvation.

He gives us His Spirit so that we can understand and enjoy what we have been given.

Notice the word **“freely.”**

Everything God gives is a gift of grace.

Cross References

Romans 8:15

> The Spirit you received does not make you slaves who live in fear again. Instead, you received the Spirit who makes you God's children. By Him we cry out, “Abba, Father.”

1 John 4:6

> We belong to God. Whoever knows God listens to us, but whoever does not belong to God does not listen to us. This is how we can tell the Spirit of truth from the spirit of lies.

John 14:17

> He is the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept Him, because it does not see Him or know Him. But you know Him, because He lives with you and will be in you.

Spiritual Principle

The Spirit is given not only to save us but to help us understand the riches of our salvation.

Key Truth

Many believers are richer in Christ than they realize.

The Spirit opens our eyes to see what we already have.

XIII. WORDS TAUGHT BY THE SPIRIT

1 Corinthians 2:13 — Spiritual Truth in Spirit-Taught Words

"This is what we speak, not in words taught by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words."

Paul now speaks about the words of the apostles.

Their message did not come from human wisdom.

It came in **"words taught by the Spirit."**

The Spirit did not only give the apostles ideas.

He guided the very words they used.

This is why Christians believe the Bible is the inspired word of God.

God used real human writers with their own personalities and styles.

But the Spirit guided what they wrote, so that the result is God's word.

The phrase **"explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words"** means that spiritual truth is matched with spiritual words.

God's truth is best explained in God's way.

Cross References

2 Peter 1:21

> No prophecy ever came from human will. Instead, people spoke from God as the Holy Spirit carried them along.

John 14:26

> But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, will teach you everything and remind you of everything I have told you.

1 Thessalonians 2:13

> We also keep thanking God that when you received God's word from us, you accepted it not as human ideas but as what it really is—the word of God, which is at work in you who believe.

Spiritual Principle

The Bible is not human wisdom about God; it is God's word given through human writers by His Spirit.

Application

Treat Scripture as the voice of God.

Read it, trust it, and obey it.

XIV. THE PERSON WITHOUT THE SPIRIT

1 Corinthians 2:14 — Spiritual Things Seem Foolish

“The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit.”

Now Paul explains why many people reject the gospel.

He describes **“the person without the Spirit.”**

This is the natural person, someone who lives only by human nature and has not been made new by God.

Paul says three things about this person.

He **does not accept** the things of God's Spirit.

He **considers them foolishness.**

He **cannot understand them.**

The problem is not a lack of intelligence.

Many brilliant people reject the gospel.

The problem is spiritual.

Spiritual truth is **“discerned only through the Spirit.”**

A person cannot see colors in a dark room, no matter how good his eyes are.

He needs light.

The Spirit is that light.

Cross References

1 Corinthians 1:18

> The message of the cross seems foolish to those who are being lost, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

Romans 8:7

> The mind controlled by the sinful nature is hostile to God. It does not obey God's law, and it cannot.

Jude 1:19

> These are the people who cause divisions. They follow their natural instincts and do not have the Spirit.

Spiritual Principle

No one can argue a person into the kingdom of God without the work of the Spirit.

Application

Keep sharing the gospel clearly.

But also pray for the Spirit to open blind eyes.

Only He can do it.

XV. THE PERSON WITH THE SPIRIT

1 Corinthians 2:15 — Discerning All Things

“The person with the Spirit makes judgments about all things, but such a person is not subject to merely human judgments.”

Now Paul describes the opposite person.

The person with the Spirit is the believer who has been made new by God.

This person **“makes judgments about all things.”**

The word means to examine, weigh, and discern.

The Spirit gives believers the ability to see life, the world, and themselves from God's point of view.

This does not mean believers know everything.

It means they have a new way of seeing.

And this person **“is not subject to merely human judgments.”**

The world cannot properly evaluate a spiritual person, because the world does not have the Spirit.

The Corinthians were judging Paul by worldly standards.

Paul is telling them that worldly standards are the wrong measuring stick.

Cross References

1 John 2:20

> But you have been anointed by the Holy One, and all of you know the truth.

1 Corinthians 6:3

> Don't you know that we will judge angels? How much more the ordinary matters of this life!

Philippians 1:9

> And this is my prayer: that your love will grow more and more in knowledge and deep understanding.

Spiritual Principle

The Spirit gives believers a new way of seeing everything.

Spiritual Warning

This verse does not give believers the right to be proud or to ignore correction.

A spiritual person is humble and teachable.

Spiritual discernment is a gift to serve others, not a license to look down on them.

XVI. THE MIND OF CHRIST

1 Corinthians 2:16 — "But We Have the Mind of Christ"

"For, "Who has known the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ."

Paul closes the chapter with a question from Isaiah 40:13.

"Who has known the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?"

The answer is: No one.

No human being can give God advice.

No one can teach God anything.

Then Paul makes an astonishing statement:

"But we have the mind of Christ."

Believers cannot instruct God.

But God has given them the mind of His Son.

Through the Spirit, believers can think Christ's thoughts after Him.

They can see what He values.

They can love what He loves.

Notice also what Paul has done.

The question in Isaiah speaks of **the LORD.**

Paul answers with **Christ.**

Once again, Jesus is placed in the position of God.

The mind of Christ is the mind of the Lord.

Cross References

Isaiah 40:13

Who has understood the Spirit of the LORD, or taught Him as His adviser?

Romans 11:34

Who has ever known the mind of the Lord? Who has ever been His adviser?

Philippians 2:5

Have the same attitude among yourselves that Christ Jesus had.

Spiritual Principle

The believer's greatest wisdom is to think like Christ.

Key Truth

The mind of Christ was humble.

It led Him to the cross.

To have the mind of Christ is to live with the humility of the cross.

XVII. SEVEN GREAT LESSONS FROM 1 CORINTHIANS 2

1. Faith Rests in God's Power, Not Human Wisdom

Paul did not preach with persuasive words but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power.

Principle:

True preaching is Spirit-filled, not built on persuasive speech, so that faith rests on God alone.

2. The Cross Is the Center

Paul resolved to know nothing among them except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

Principle:

Everything in the Christian life flows from the cross and leads back to it.

3. God Uses Weak Servants

Paul came in weakness, fear, and trembling.

Principle:

God's power is seen most clearly when His servants depend on Him.

4. God's Wisdom Is Hidden from the World

The rulers of this age did not understand it, and so they crucified the Lord of glory.

Principle:

Spiritual truth cannot be discovered by intellect alone; it must be revealed by God.

5. The Spirit Reveals the Deep Things of God

What no eye has seen and no ear has heard, God has revealed by His Spirit.

Principle:

We know God because God makes Himself known.

6. The Spirit Grants Discernment

The person without the Spirit sees spiritual things as foolishness, but the person with the Spirit discerns all things.

Principle:

Only those who have the Spirit of God can understand the deep things of God.

7. We Share in the Mind of Christ

No one can instruct the Lord, but believers have the mind of Christ.

Principle:

Believers are given the ability to see life through Christ's wisdom and to walk in truth and spiritual understanding.

XVIII. FROM ATHENS TO CORINTH

To understand verses 1–5, it helps to remember where Paul had just been.

Athens

Before coming to Corinth, Paul was in Athens.

He spoke in the marketplace and before the council of the Areopagus.

He reasoned with Epicurean and Stoic philosophers.

Some mocked him.

A few believed.

Corinth

Paul then traveled to Corinth.

He stayed with Aquila and Priscilla and worked with them making tents.

He preached in the synagogue every Sabbath.

When opposition grew, he moved next door to the house of Titius Justus.

The Lord encouraged him in a vision, and Paul stayed a year and a half.

Paul's Decision

In Corinth, Paul resolved to know nothing except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

He did not abandon careful thinking.

But he refused to let clever speech take the place of the cross.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

God does not need our polish; He needs our faithfulness.

XIX. TWO KINDS OF PEOPLE

1 Corinthians 2 describes two kinds of people.

The Person Without the Spirit

- Lives only by natural human understanding.
- Does not accept the things of God's Spirit.
- Thinks spiritual truth is foolishness.
- Cannot understand the things of God.
- Needs the Spirit to open his eyes.

The Person With the Spirit

- Has received the Spirit who is from God.
- Understands what God has freely given.
- Discerns all things from God's point of view.
- Is not measured by merely human judgments.
- Has the mind of Christ.

Key Truth

The difference between these two people is not intelligence, education, or background.

The difference is the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Looking Ahead

In Chapter 3, Paul will describe a third kind of person: a believer who has the Spirit but is still living in worldly ways.

The Corinthians were in that group.

XX. WHAT 1 CORINTHIANS 2 TEACHES ABOUT THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Spirit Gives Power

Paul's preaching came with a demonstration of the Spirit's power.

The Spirit Reveals

God has revealed His hidden wisdom by His Spirit.

The Spirit Is Fully God

He searches all things, even the deep things of God.

Only God can fully know God.

The Spirit Knows God's Thoughts

No one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.

The Spirit Is Given to Believers

We have received the Spirit who is from God.

The Spirit Teaches

The apostles spoke in words taught by the Spirit.

The Spirit Gives Discernment

Spiritual things are discerned only through the Spirit.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Without the Holy Spirit, the gospel would remain a closed book; with the Spirit, it becomes living truth.

XXI. WHAT 1 CORINTHIANS 2 TEACHES ABOUT JESUS

Jesus Christ Crucified

He is the center of the message Paul preached.

The Lord of Glory

The One the rulers crucified is the Lord to whom all glory belongs.

The Wisdom of God

He is the hidden wisdom God planned before time began.

The Lord Whose Mind No One Can Instruct

Paul applies the words of Isaiah about the LORD to Christ.

The One Whose Mind Believers Share

By the Spirit, believers have the mind of Christ.

Key Truth

The crucified Jesus is the Lord of glory, and to know Him is to know the wisdom of God.

XXII. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR PERSONAL STUDY

Question 1

Why did Paul refuse to come with eloquence or human wisdom?

Corinth admired skilled speakers and clever arguments.

Paul did not want people to be won by his speaking ability.

He wanted them to be won by the truth about God.

Question 2

What does Paul mean when he says he resolved to know nothing except Jesus Christ and Him crucified?

He made a deliberate decision to keep the cross at the center of all his preaching.

He did not stop teaching other truths.

But every truth he taught was connected to Christ crucified.

Question 3

Why was Paul afraid when he came to Corinth?

He had faced beatings, prison, and opposition in the cities before Corinth.

Corinth was a proud and immoral city.

The Lord encouraged him in a vision not to be afraid, because He was with him.

Question 4

Why did Paul want the Corinthians' faith to rest on God's power instead of human wisdom?

Faith built on human wisdom can be knocked down by a better argument.

Faith built on God's power stands firm.

Question 5

If the gospel looks like foolishness, why does Paul say he speaks wisdom?

The gospel is the deepest wisdom there is.

But it is God's wisdom, not the wisdom of this age.

It is understood by those who have the Spirit.

Question 6

What is a “mystery” in the Bible?

A mystery is a truth that was once hidden and could only be known when God revealed it.

It is not a puzzle for clever people to solve.

Question 7

Who were the “rulers of this age” who crucified the Lord of glory?

They included the religious leaders in Jerusalem, Herod, and Pilate, the Roman governor.

Many Bible students also see spiritual powers of darkness standing behind them.

None of them understood God's plan.

Question 8

What does verse 9 mean when it says no eye has seen and no ear has heard?

God's plan of salvation could not be discovered by observation, tradition, or imagination.

It includes the future glory God has prepared.

But first of all it describes the gospel, which no human could have invented.

Question 9

How does verse 10 show that the Holy Spirit is God?

The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God.

Only someone who is fully God could know God completely.

Question 10

Why do intelligent people sometimes reject the gospel?

The problem is not their intelligence.

The problem is spiritual blindness.

Spiritual truth is discerned only through the Spirit.

Question 11

What does it mean that the spiritual person “makes judgments about all things”?

The Spirit helps believers see life, people, and the world from God's point of view.

It does not make them proud or above correction.

It gives them discernment to serve God and others.

Question 12

What does it mean to have the mind of Christ?

Through the Spirit, believers can think as Christ thinks.

They value what He values and love what He loves.

Having the mind of Christ means living with His humility, obedience, and love.

XXIII. PERSONAL APPLICATION

1 Corinthians 2 asks several important questions.

Is the Cross at the Center of My Faith?

Or have I moved on to other things?

What Does My Faith Rest On?

A preacher? A feeling? An argument?

Or the power of God?

Am I Letting Fear Stop Me?

Paul trembled, but he still obeyed.

Do I Depend on the Holy Spirit?

When I read the Bible, do I ask the Spirit to teach me?

Am I Measuring Things by the World's Standards?

Do I judge people and ministries by how impressive they look?

Do I Pray for Those Who Do Not Understand?

Only the Spirit can open blind eyes.

Am I Thinking with the Mind of Christ?

Is my thinking shaped by Christ's humility and love?

XXIV. A CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“What God Reveals, No One Could Discover”

Human beings have always searched for answers.

We have studied the stars.

We have built schools of philosophy.

We have written libraries full of books.

But no telescope ever found the cross.

No philosopher ever reasoned his way to a crucified Savior.

No human imagination ever pictured God becoming man and dying for sinners.

The greatest truth in the universe could not be discovered.

It had to be revealed.

And God revealed it by His Spirit.

This creates a powerful principle.

We never stand over God's word as its judge.

We sit under it as learners.

We do not find God by climbing up.

God finds us by coming down.

Principle:

The most important things we know about God, we know only because God chose to tell us.

XXV. FINAL APPLICATION

1 Corinthians Chapter 2 was written to people who loved wisdom.

They admired great speakers.

They prized knowledge.

They thought of themselves as spiritual.

But they were measuring the things of God with the ruler of the world.

Paul reminded them how the gospel first came to them.

Not through a polished speaker.

Through a trembling man with a simple message.

Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

And the result was not human applause.

It was the power of God.

1 Corinthians 2 therefore reminds us:

Never be ashamed of a simple message.

Never confuse being impressive with being powerful.

Never trust human wisdom more than God's word.

Never try to understand God's truth without God's Spirit.

The church does not need a cleverer message.

It needs:

The cross at the center.

The Spirit's power.

God's revealed word.

And the mind of Christ.

The same message still saves:

Tell people about Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

Tell people that God's wisdom is greater than the world's.

Tell people that God has prepared things beyond imagination for those who love Him.

Tell people that the Spirit opens blind eyes.

And as you go:

Depend on the Spirit.

Rest on God's power.

Keep the cross at the center.

Think with the mind of Christ.

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father,

Thank You for the message of Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

Thank You that our faith does not rest on human wisdom, but on Your power.

Thank You that You use weak and trembling servants to do Your work.

Thank You for Your hidden wisdom, planned before time began for our glory.

Thank You that the Lord of glory was crucified for us.

Thank You for the things You have prepared for those who love You—things no eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has imagined.

Thank You for giving us Your Holy Spirit.

Thank You that He knows the deep things of God and has made them known to us.

Forgive us when we trust clever words more than Your word.

Forgive us when we measure Your work by the world's standards.

Forgive us when fear keeps us silent.

Keep the cross at the center of our lives.

Teach us by Your Spirit as we read Your word.

Give us discernment to see all things from Your point of view.

Open the eyes of those who do not yet understand the gospel.

Help us to speak the truth with courage, even when we tremble.

Shape our thinking until we truly have the mind of Christ.

May our faith rest on You alone.

“But we have the mind of Christ.”

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Key Verse

“For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.” — 1 Corinthians 2:2

Central Truth

True faith rests on God's power, not human wisdom, because the hidden wisdom of God in Christ crucified can only be known as the Holy Spirit reveals it to those who belong to Him.

1 Corinthians 2 in One Sentence

Paul reminds the Corinthians that he preached only Christ crucified in weakness and in the Spirit's power, because God's hidden wisdom cannot be discovered by the world but is revealed by the Spirit, who gives believers the mind of Christ.