

Series: 1 Cor  
Title: Hidden Wisdom  
Text: 1 Corinthians 2: 7-10  
Date: September 17, 2015  
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Our subject is “Hidden Wisdom.”

**1 Corinthians 2: 7: But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, *even* the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: 8: Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known *it*, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.**

“We”—true, God-born, God-redeemed, God-taught, God-sent, God-blessed preachers—“We preach the wisdom of God.” God’s Wisdom is the message we preach—we preach the wisdom of God. God’s wisdom in making his glory known is the gospel we preach. God’s wisdom in glorifying his Son, giving Christ all preeminence is the gospel we preach. God’s wisdom in saving a chosen, helpless people from among the sea of fallen humanity is the gospel we preach.

The wisdom of God is the only truly needful wisdom and the only true eternally beneficial wisdom that exists. So then why do only a remnant take an interest? Why do so many consider our gospel foolishness?

The reason so few cherish the wisdom of God which we preach is because the gospel must be revealed by God and is only cherished when God makes us know Wisdom.

## **A MYSTERY REVEALED**

Until God reveals Christ in the heart, the wisdom of God is a mystery to sinners—“**But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery,...**” (1 Cor 2: 7)

What do the scriptures mean by “a mystery?” When scripture speaks of a “mystery”, it is the truth of God which was secret or hidden but is now newly revealed by God in the heart of the child of grace.

In Ephesians 1, the apostle Paul wrote of the election of God the Father whereby he blessed his people with all spiritual blessings from eternity when he chose us in Christ. God predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ. Then speaking of Christ, Paul wrote,

Ephesians 1: 7: In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; 8: Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; 9: Having made known unto us **the mystery of his will**, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: 10: That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; *even* in him:

God must make known the mystery of his will or we will never know it. The mystery of his will which God reveals in the hearts of his people is that in the end of times, God shall gather together in one all things in Christ—both which are in heaven and on earth—even in Christ. Then in chapter 3, Paul wrote,

Ephesians 3: 1: For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, 2 If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward:

The dispensation of the grace of God means the stewardship. God’s true preachers “are stewards of the mysteries of God.” God’s people are “stewards of the manifold grace of God.” (1 Cor 4: 1; 1 Pet 4: 10) Christ Jesus gave Paul this stewardship to minister to the Gentiles. He says,

Ephesians 3: 3: How that **by revelation he made known unto me the mystery;**

It is by divine revelation from God, in the new heart, that God makes known the mystery of the gospel. As we saw in chapter 1, this is the first thing this word “mystery” means in the scriptures. The gospel is called a “mystery” because it is hidden from the natural born sinner unless God reveals it in his heart. Paul was very religious. But it was all man-made. Then Christ revealed himself to Paul and made know the mystery of the gospel to Paul. Paul goes on,

Ephesians 3: 3:...(as I wrote afore in few words, 4: Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in **the mystery of Christ**)

This is another thing “mystery” means. It is “the mystery of Christ.” The mystery we preach is Christ. Christ is the Wisdom of God and the Power of God. It is Christ who makes his people one, with God and one another, which is what Paul has been writing about in the first two chapters of Ephesians.

Ephesians 3: 5: Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit;

This is another reason the gospel is called the “mystery” in the scriptures. In ages past, the gospel of Christ was made known by the Spirit of God to his elect but not to the degree it is now that Christ has come. God did not reveal the mystery of Christ to the old testament saints in the degree of revelation that he reveals to his saints today because now Christ has come in the flesh and finished his work. We can also apply this to individual believers. The gospel is a mystery to the individual believer in this way, too. As time goes by, God grows us more and more in the knowledge of Christ Jesus. “The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.” (Pro 4: 18) Christ is the Light. As we learn of Christ his Light shines more and more unto the day we enter glory.

Ephesians 3: 6: That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel:

Paul declares the mystery which they did not see as fully as we have revealed to us now. Now, by fulfilling the law on our behalf, Christ has taken down the middle wall that divided God’s elect from God and that divided Jew and Gentile from each other. Christ has taken the law out of the way. Now, by divine revelation, we see more clearly that God’s Israel is not that political nation. But God’s Israel is his elect called out from among Jew and Gentile. We are called into one family—“fellowheirs.” We are called into one body—“the same body.” We are made partakers of one everlasting covenant—“partakers of his promise.” It is all in one Redeemer—“in Christ.” God reveals to his elect that our salvation is by God’s covenant promise in Christ, not by our works. God works this in our hearts through the preaching of this gospel, not through the works of the law. These truths are more clearly revealed now that Christ has finished the work of redemption and arisen to the right hand of the Father than they were under the old covenant economy. Paul says,

Ephesians 3: 7: Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power. 8: Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; 9: And to make all *men see* what is **the fellowship of the mystery**, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:

Our acceptance by God into God’s presence as well as our fellowship with one another in the church of God was a mystery hidden in God’s ordained purpose from eternity. It was all created by Jesus Christ from eternity because Christ entered into the everlasting covenant with God to fulfill all. This is the wisdom of God that is a hidden mystery until God reveals it in our hearts. We find Paul writing something very similar in Romans 16.

Romans 16: 25: Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, **according to the revelation of the mystery**, which was kept secret since the world began, 26: But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith:

God must establish us. God does it through the preaching of Christ. God does so by revelation of the mystery. This mystery was kept secret from eternity but is now made manifest by God in the heart of his elect. Again, Paul writes almost the same words in Colossians.

Colossians 1:26: *Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints:* 27: To whom God would make known what is **the riches of the glory of this mystery** among the Gentiles; **which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:** 28: Whom we preach...

The mystery of the gospel which has been hidden in ages past but is now revealed more fully to his saints today, is Christ in the midst of his church working redemption for us and Christ in our hearts working regeneration in us.

So we see scriptures mean that a “mystery” is that which was before hidden but is now revealed in the heart of God’s child by the grace and power of God. There is a saying among men, “If it is new, it is not true.” It means the gospel is old as eternity. This is true. But when God reveals his truth in our hearts—though it is as old as eternity—it is new to us. So do not let a man-made saying hinder you from receiving God’s eternal truth simply because it is newly revealed to you. Our gospel never changes. But the gospel is a mystery because it is continually revealed by God in his saints in newer, fuller light as it was to the apostles after Christ arose. It is called growing in grace and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ.

### **A MYSTERY RECEIVED BY FAITH**

Also, scriptures speak of “a mystery” as truth which can only be received and believed by faith but cannot be explained and grasped by our limited intellect. Here are two examples in scripture,

1 Timothy 3: 16: And without controversy great is **the mystery of godliness:** God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.

Ephesians 5: 30: For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. 31: For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. 32: **This is a great mystery:** but I speak concerning Christ and the church. (Eph 5:30-32)

The gospel is full of “mysteries” which cannot be explained or understood by natural reasoning. The gospel must, and can only, be received by God-given faith. “Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” (Heb 11: 1)

For instance, no man can explain one God in three persons. But by divine revelation we believe God. We cannot grasp how God was made flesh and became the GodMan. But by God’s effectual working in our heart we believe God. It is a great mystery how Christ, who knew no sin, made sin for us, while at the same time, through the eternal Spirit, he offered himself without spot to God. But by God’s grace we believe God. It is beyond our ability to comprehend how Christ was raised from the dead and now in a human, glorified body lives in the third heaven and reigns over all! But by grace we believe God. Each believer sees our sinfulness, yet God says our body of sins is dead and we are alive unto God forevermore, made the righteousness and holiness of God in Christ Jesus.

These are all great truths which were once concealed but are now revealed in our hearts by the Spirit of God. They are mysteries which we can never explain and must not. We receive them and believe them by God-given faith.

Job 11: 7: Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? 8: *It is* as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know? 9: The measure thereof *is* longer than the earth, and broader than the sea.

I found it interesting that the root word of the Greek word translated “mystery” means “to shut the mouth.” Indeed, when God reveals the mystery of the gospel in our hearts, God truly shuts our mouth. The gospel makes us cease

being wise in our own conceits and makes us wise unto salvation, “For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of **this mystery**, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits.” (Rom 11: 25)

## A MYSTERY ACCORDING TO PURPOSE

The gospel is the mystery which is hidden to some and revealed to others according to God’s eternal purpose—“**But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory:**” (1 Cor 2: 7)

The gospel is a mystery which must be revealed by God because God ordained it to be so before the world was made. God ordained it “unto our glory.” What does that mean “unto our glory?”

One, God ordained that the gospel must be revealed, how the gospel would be revealed and to whom it would be revealed so that his people would surely have the gospel revealed unto us and would be saved unto glory by God. By God ordaining every detail of salvation and entrusting it to Christ each of God’s elect are sure to be brought unto eternal glory and none shall be lost. “Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed.” (Rom 5: 16)

Two, God ordained the gospel must be revealed and how the gospel would be revealed so that “our glorying” would not be in our flesh but only in the Lord. It is God who reveals the gospel and who must reveal it. Therefore, those truly made to know the mystery of the gospel do not glory in our flesh but only in the Lord. (1 Cor 1: 29-31)

So the reason that some believe the wisdom of God is because of God’s ordained purpose. We read in Acts, “And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.” (Acts 13: 48) From eternity, by his grace, God ordained that he would regenerate some, make us like babies, willing to be taught of Christ and God ordained the he would reveal the gospel to us.

But God also ordained that he would hide the gospel from the wise and prudent. Who are they? The “wise and prudent” are those who claim to believe God but boast that they know and believe by their fleshly will and wisdom. They glory in their flesh. God hides the gospel from such. They may claim to know and believe the mystery of God but in reality they have hardened their hearts, shut their eyes and closed their ears to the truth, including the truth that God alone must reveal the gospel. They think they see so they will not come bowed down to the Son of God asking his mercy and grace to reveal the gospel unto them, that they might have life as a free gift. Sinner, you will never know Christ if you trust in the pride of your own fleshly wisdom! Listen to Christ,

Luke 10: 21: In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight. 22: All things are delivered to me of my Father: and no man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and *he* to whom the Son will reveal *him*.

The glory of revealing the gospel is Christ’s! So we see three reasons that God ordained the gospel to be a mystery: God’s eternal purpose in making it necessary that Christ reveal the gospel to us is to glorify his Son, it is to guarantee the salvation of those God ordained to eternal life and it is to abase every proud sinner so that we glory only in the Lord! “We [preach] the wisdom of God in a mystery, *even the hidden wisdom*, which God ordained before the world unto our glory.” Again we hear Christ declare it,

Matthew 13: 10: And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables? 11: He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. 12: For whosoever hath, [by God’s wisdom, by God’s grace, by God’s gift of revelation] to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, [whosoever boasts in his own fleshly wisdom] from him shall be taken away even that he hath. 13: Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. 14: And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: 15: For this people’s heart is waxed gross, and *their* ears are dull of

hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with *their* eyes, and hear with *their* ears, and should understand with *their* heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. 16: But blessed *are* your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear.

Never attempt to see and understand and believe by your fleshly eyes, ears and hear. Next time we will see that it is an impossibility, “But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.” (1 Cor 2: 9) The wisdom of God is a mystery hidden unless God reveals it in the heart God has made. God must give a new heart, new eyes, new ears, a new understanding. “Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things *are* of God...” (2 Cor 5: 17)

## **A MYSTERY REVEALED BY THE FAITH OF CHRIST NOT THE FLESH**

Lastly, in our text, we see that knowing and believing the wisdom of God has nothing to do with our flesh. It has nothing to do with our fleshly power and advantages—“**Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.**” (1 Cor 2: 8)

The “princes” were the highest, most powerful rulers of this world. These were the well-educated, with the most advantage as far as education is concerned. But the wisdom of God is not attained by our flesh. The highest rulers in religion and civil government—with all their advantage—did not know Christ. Therefore they crucified the Lord of glory.

But Paul says in our text that if they had known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. If Christ had spoken effectually, creating in them a new heart, revealing himself in them, then they would have known him—and they would not have crucified the Lord of glory because “Unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.” 1 Cor 2: 23)

The apostle Paul knew what he was talking about because he was once one of those “princes.” He was a ruler in Israel trusting the works of his flesh. But after Christ revealed himself to Paul, Paul knew that Christ is the Power of God and the Wisdom of God and Paul ceased persecuting Christ, bowed and believed.

It is because Christ is the Power of God and the Wisdom of God, this mystery we preach. How so? How do I know when the mystery of Christ is revealed in me by God? How do I know that Christ is made Wisdom unto me? We will use what Paul wrote in Galatians 2: 20 to see four things which are included when the mystery of Christ is revealed in the heart and Christ is made Wisdom to us of God.

First, concerning God’s justice. God reveals that Christ is the one in whom God honored and satisfied his justice. God slew his people when he slew Christ in their room and stead on the cross. Paul was made to know, “I am crucified with Christ...” (Gal 2: 20)

Second, concerning our justification. Christ is the one by whom God justified his people from our sins and raised us to newness of life. Paul said, “...nevertheless I live.” (Gal 2: 20)

Thirdly, concerning our life and the revelation of the gospel. Christ is not only the Way mercy and truth have met together, Christ is the Life of the new heart and the Truth revealed in us through the gospel. Paul said, “...yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.” (Gal 2: 20)

Fourthly, concerning our obedience to the faith. When of God Christ is made unto us wisdom then the sinner will cease crucifying the Lord of glory, we will bow in faith and we will live the rest of our days unto God. This too is by the faithfulness of Christ working in us. Christ keeps us living by faith in him constrained by his love for us—Paul wrote, “...and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.” (Gal 2: 20) When Christ is All my salvation then of God is Christ made unto us Wisdom!

**Amen**