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# THE GLORY OF CHRIST REVEALED BY THE SPIRIT

WHY SAVING FAITH DEPENDS ON GOD'S  
REVELATION

## The Glory of Christ Revealed by the Spirit

A Reflection of 1 Corinthians 2:1-12

*And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. 2 For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. 3 And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling, 4 and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, 5 so that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.*

*6 Yet among the mature we do impart wisdom, although it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to pass away. 7 But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glory. 8 None of the rulers of this age understood this, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. 9 But, as it is written,*

*“What no eye has seen, nor ear heard,  
nor the heart of man imagined,  
what God has prepared for those who love him”—*

*10 these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. 11 For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. 12 Now we have received*

*not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God.*

The church in Corinth existed in a culture that prized eloquence, status, philosophical sophistication, and public honor. Wisdom was measured by rhetorical skill and intellectual achievement. Yet when the Apostle Paul writes to this church, he does not appeal to those cultural values. Instead, he reminds them that the saving knowledge of God does not rest in human capacity but in divine revelation.

In this passage, Paul is not offering a lesson on preaching technique. He is confessing a theology of revelation, redemption, and regeneration. More than that, Paul insists that the natural human mind, so highly esteemed in Corinth, is incapable of knowing the wisdom of God apart from the work of the Holy Spirit.

This raises a central and unavoidable question. How does God make Himself known savingly to sinners?

Paul's answer is unmistakable. God reveals His wisdom through Christ crucified, proclaimed by the Word, and received only by the Spirit.

## **The Content of Apostolic Proclamation**

Verses 1–2

Paul begins by reminding the Corinthians what he proclaimed when he first came to them. He came declaring the testimony of God and resolved to know nothing among them except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

This resolution does not suggest a lack of theological depth, nor is it an attempt to reduce the gospel to something simplistic. It reflects theological clarity. Paul's message was intentionally centered on the person and redemptive work of Christ, with particular focus on the cross. The cross is not merely one doctrine among many. It stands at the very center of God's self-disclosure.

Jesus Himself taught that all Scripture points to Him. In Luke 24:27, beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, He explained the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures. Paul's preaching follows that same redemptive focus. The cross of Christ is the interpretive center of God's saving purposes.

Paul makes this explicit earlier in the letter when he writes that Christ crucified is the power of God and the wisdom of God in 1 Corinthians 1:23–24. Isaiah foretold this suffering Messiah in Isaiah 53:5–6, declaring that He would bear the sins of many. Jesus fulfills that prophecy perfectly, and Paul proclaims that fulfillment openly and unashamedly.

The gospel is not abstract wisdom or philosophical insight. It is the historical, redemptive work of God accomplished in Christ. As Paul writes in Galatians 6:14, he boasts only in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, our only true source of righteousness before the holy God of heaven and earth.

## **The Manner of Apostolic Ministry**

Verses 3–5

Paul then reminds the Corinthians of the posture with which he ministered among them. He came in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. These words reveal a man who understands the weight of eternal truth and the seriousness of proclaiming the gospel of Christ.

This posture is consistent with a broader biblical pattern. Moses trembled before the presence of God at the burning bush in Exodus 3:6. Isaiah cried out in the temple when he became aware of his sinfulness in Isaiah 6:5. Jeremiah confessed his weakness and dependence upon the Lord in Jeremiah 1:6–8.

Paul's ministry did not depend upon rhetorical persuasion or human confidence. He says his message came in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that faith would rest in God rather than in men.

Scripture repeatedly affirms this principle. Psalm 20:7 reminds us that some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God. Zechariah 4:6 declares that the work of God advances not by might nor by power, but by His Spirit.

Saving faith itself is produced by God. Jesus teaches in John 6:63 that it is the Spirit who gives life and that the flesh profits nothing. Paul reinforces this truth in Ephesians 2:8–9 when he explains that faith is a gift of God. No part of salvation rests in the abilities of fallen humanity. It is entirely the work of God's sovereign grace in Christ Jesus.

## **The Nature of True Wisdom**

Verses 6–9

Paul now clarifies that the gospel truly is wisdom. It is wisdom among the mature, yet it is not the wisdom of this age or of its rulers.

God's wisdom is eternal, redemptive, and purposeful. Paul says it was decreed before the ages for our glory. This language echoes God's eternal plan of redemption described in Ephesians 1:4–5, where believers are chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world.

The rulers of this age did not understand this wisdom. Had they understood it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. Peter makes a similar point in Acts 3:17–18 when he explains that Christ’s suffering fulfilled what God foretold through the prophets.

Paul then quotes from the prophet Isaiah to show that God’s wisdom surpasses human perception. What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, God has prepared for those who love Him. This draws from Isaiah 64:4 and Isaiah 65:17.

God’s redemptive plan is not discovered by human investigation or intellectual achievement. It must be revealed by God Himself.

## **The Revelation of God Through the Spirit**

Verses 10–12

Paul concludes this section by explaining how this divine wisdom is made known. God reveals it through the Spirit. The Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God.

The Spirit is not a created messenger or an impersonal force. He is God Himself. Just as a man’s spirit knows his own thoughts, so the Spirit of God knows the mind of God. This affirms both the personal nature and full deity of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus promised this ministry of the Spirit in John 16:13–15. The Spirit would guide the apostles into all truth and glorify Christ by taking what belongs to Him and making it known to God’s people.

Paul tells believers that they have received the Spirit who is from God so that they might understand the things freely given to them by God. These gifts include justification, adoption, sanctification, and future glory. Romans 8:15–17 speaks of the Spirit bearing witness that we are children of God and heirs with Christ.

This work of the Spirit is essential. As Paul will explain in the verses that follow, the natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God. Regeneration precedes understanding. Jesus taught Nicodemus in John 3:3 that unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

## **Conclusion**

This passage reminds us that the Christian faith rests upon divine revelation rather than human discovery. God has spoken through His Son, accomplished redemption through the cross, and applies that redemption by the Holy Spirit.

The church is sustained not by cleverness or cultural insight, but by the Word of the cross and the power of the Spirit. Our confidence is grounded in God's eternal wisdom and sovereign grace.

As Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 4:6, the God who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

May we trust that wisdom, proclaim that Christ, and depend wholly upon the Spirit who reveals the things freely given to us by God.

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