

2016-17-11 1 Corinthians 2:6-13 What is true spiritual wisdom? Epiphany 6 Monday, February 13, 2017  
By Pastor Kenneth Mellon, Trinity Lutheran Church and School, Pleasant Valley Rd., West Bend, WI

God's grace and peace through your Lord and Savior Jesus have been revealed to you by the Holy Spirit! Paul wrote to the congregation in Corinth about true lasting wisdom from God in 1 Corinthians 2:6-13 These are Your words heavenly Father, that we may know Your saving truth. Your Word is truth! Amen.

Dear wise Christians,

Most everyone has heard of Bill Nye, the science guy, who has been seen on TV for years teaching children interesting science experiments. Mr. Nye is still popular. I saw him in one of the Superbowl commercials. If only he would have stayed with the study of nature, he have been fine. Unfortunately, beneath his quiet demeanor, is a man set against the truths of the Bible. His faith is in evolution; and science is his "god." He opposes anyone who thinks that creation of the world in 6 days is scientifically true. When the Bible describes creation it is foolishness to him. This kind of view is not just found about creation but many truths of the Bible. May this opposition to God's Word lead us to keep seeking God's truth and ask:

### **What is true spiritual wisdom?**

**First, true spiritual wisdom has one source.** Corinth had many highly educated men who used persuasion to sway Christians to their way of thinking which was based on the perspective of the sinful world. How different it was when Paul first preached at Corinth. He did not persuade people by rhetoric. He spoke of God the Creator who was ready to judge them for their sins. As he preached, the Holy Spirit convinced some people of their sins and that they could not save themselves. Then, Paul preached of Christ who took that judgment in their place, was crucified, risen from death, and is now ruling as Lord of all. Many received Christ's forgiveness through faith in Him. What a wonderful change that must have been!

After Paul left Corinth, false teachers moved in bringing harm to the congregation. Some Christians thought that they need to add to God's Word with human wisdom. It was tearing the church apart and many were becoming lost. Today, the same thing is happening among too many churches in our country. Leaders seek wisdom from people but not from God's plain Word and it shows in their lack of faith!

Paul wanted the people to understand that his teaching did not originate with him but from God. He wrote, *"God has revealed it to us by His Spirit. The Spirit searches all things.... This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit. (v. 10, 13)*

The devil is always trying to pass off human or ungodly thinking as a higher truth than what God offers. Paul assured them that it was God the Holy Spirit who brought them to saving faith and He alone would keep them in that faith through His Word. He inspired Paul to write exactly what He wanted him to say. Today, it is the same Holy Spirit that gives us His Word and He is working to assure us that His teachings are certain for life!

**Second, there is a huge difference between spiritual wisdom and worldly wisdom.** Paul wrote, *"We ... speak a message of wisdom among the mature [believers], but not the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. (v.6)* Where will Bill Nye and his theories of evolution lead people? To him, people are advanced animals and can be treated like animals with killing those who are weak or sick and aborting those who are unwanted. If there is no Creator, then people don't need to answer to God. They can make their own rules of right and wrong. They can fashion "god" in their own image as Mr. Nye has done and pick and choose what Commandments to keep. Many are doing just that today as they redefine "marriage" or legalize sins. Things are no different now than the false religions at Paul's time. But, Paul made sure the Christians knew the end of these false teachings would lead instead of gain to judgment!

God's wisdom is in Christ alone. Jesus is the true way to blessing from God. Many groups and scientists put their faith in evolution and excluded Jesus. But in the past, God's Son took part in the creation of the world along with God the Father. And Jesus is the only source of future life in heaven! Without Him people have nothing. John wrote, "Whoever *believes in Him will have eternal life.... But whoever does not believe stands condemned.*" (John 3:16, 18) The world's religions say that all paths eventually lead to God. But, Jesus made it clear that no one comes to God except by Him (John 14:6) If people are hiking in a large forest and get lost in the dark, they want to find the right path to take them to safety. To follow the wrong path would lead them further danger. So there is only one way for the spiritually lost. That is Jesus Christ!

Paul continued, "*We speak of God's ... wisdom that God destined for our glory before time began. None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.*" (v. 6-8) People in general understand that soldiers make sacrifices for our country to give us freedom. Parents make sacrifices for their children to give them a better future. But they cannot understand how God would be willing to sacrifice His own Son by sending Him into the world to die for those who opposed Him.

Just as some people don't appreciate the sacrifice that soldiers make for their freedoms and they use their freedom to hurt others and just as children don't always appreciate what their parents have done for them, so people by nature do not thank God for what He did through Jesus. By nature they think that they are good enough to earn a position with God. But Peter on Pentecost preached how people had rejected God's Son. After describing God raised Jesus from the dead, Peter said, "*Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.*" (Acts 2:36) Hearing this news, many repented of the sinful trust in themselves and received Christ's forgiveness. Still today everyone needs to realize this truth to be saved. If not, it states in Revelation, "*Look, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him; and all the peoples of the earth will mourn because of him.*" (Revelation 1:7) Unbelief will lead to a terrible judgment by Christ on the Last day. But, this is not what God wants to happen to people. That is why He has given us His Word to truly help us.

**Third, God's wisdom culminates in glory.** In any competition there is a goal. A person wins by being the fastest or getting the most points. The goal of God's wisdom is for each person to receive the gift of eternal life! This world praises the achievements of people at award shows and rewards those who do well with riches and honor. But it is short-lived and then if they don't have Christ they will go from the heights of human praise to the depths of eternal shame, darkness, and loneliness in hell.

God's wisdom often leads us along a path of obscurity and a way of life that the world sees no value in. Paul wrote, "*No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him*" (v.9) It's difficult even for believers to comprehend the grace of God and what gift of heaven will be like. But, Paul wrote, "*We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us.*" (v.12) We believe that our Savior has won for us a new world that will be sinless. He will recreate believers with perfect minds and bodies. He will bring us into the presence of our awesome God to share His mutual love. The Holy Spirit has worked through the Gospel to convince us of these truths and to keep us in that faith in Christ until we see Jesus face to face.

Heavenly wisdom or human wisdom, which is greater? There is no debate. Christ is our Savior and our only way to heavenly glory. We see the value of spiritual truths and we will oppose anyone who offers only empty promises. Thank God for the Holy Spirit who has given us such wisdom in Christ! Amen.