

Fifth Sunday after Epiphany

February 5, 2023

“God, the Holy Spirit has revealed the mystery of His salvation to you!”

(1 Corinthians 2:6-10)

By Rev. Ed Weber

Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, Amen.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, our text for this 5th Sunday after Epiphany is from our Epistle reading 1 Corinthians 2:6-10.

“6 However, we speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. 7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory, 8 which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

9 But as it is written:

“Eye has not seen, nor ear heard,

Nor have entered into the heart of man

The things which God has prepared for those who love Him.”

10 But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.

Here ends our text.

Eye has not seen, nor ear heard... This verse seems to be so out of place in today's modern age. For we live in a time where you can see anything and hear anything you want in just a few seconds...on any electronic device...your ipad, computer, phone, television. And you can do that without adjusting the rabbit ears on your TV or hanging a piece of foil of them. Oh, the good old days of 3 black and white fuzzy channels...

We live in a 4K world of live streaming and social media and instant news and spy balloons traversing our country at 60,000 feet. Yes, apparently China wanted a closer look at our weather in Montana, especially the weather around our nuclear missile silo fields. Indeed, eyes have seen in high resolution what isn't so easily seen from satellites way out in space.

If you want to see something, you can find a way to do it, whether by a camera in a laparoscopic surgery, or through a Hubble telescope, a ring doorbell camera, police body cam footage, google maps, or a floating balloon until it meets a sidewinder missile.

Hopefully, our government jammed the signal so that unwanted eyes didn't see things that could put our country at risk before it fell into the Atlantic ocean.

But as talented as mankind is at searching the depths of space and the ocean, again looking for those "weather" balloon parts, no man has or can search for the deep things of God. For they must be revealed to him or her by the Holy Spirit.

"Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him."

This verse that Paul paraphrases from Isaiah 64:4 speaks of sinful man's complete inability to know the plan of salvation until it is revealed to him or her.

It is a wisdom which the rulers of this age or any age cannot perceive through science or technology. As we heard last week in the first chapter of 1 Corinthians, the wisdom of God is foolishness to man.

"Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? 21 For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe." (1 Corinthians 1:20-21)

And Paul reemphasizes this thought as we began chapter 2 of our epistle reading in that he came to the Corinthians not with eloquent speech or man's wisdom but with the simple testimony of God – that is, the Gospel!

"And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God."

And what is that testimony that no eye can see or ear can hear unless it is revealed to him or her? Paul focused his speech, that is his informal conversation and his formal preaching like a laser beam on the only saving truth that all men need to know!

2 For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. 3 I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. 4 And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, 5 that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.” (1 Corinthians 2:1-5)

Human wisdom cannot provide the power to save the soul. It must be revealed to sinful man by the Holy Spirit! As verse 14 of our epistle tells us:

“14 But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” (1 Corinthians 2:14)

But again, from chapter 1 Paul says:

“22 For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom; 23 but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, 24 but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.” (1 Corinthians 1:22-24)

But when God elects, calls and gives this faith to see Him through Jesus, the Savior, the response of the believing heart is love for God!

“Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him.”

“Christ crucified” is the message that our ears gladly hear and believe by the power of the Holy Spirit. This is the deep wisdom that God purposed from before the creation of the world that He would save all mankind by the death of His Son, Jesus Christ!

This is the message that makes the deaf hear and the blind see, that the Word, the Son of God was made flesh, and through His death paid for the sins of the whole world. This simple message seems so foolish. Why would you come Sunday after Sunday to hear it? You could be doing so many other “wise” things instead like sleeping in, going to the beach, going to work out, playing games on the computer...or you get the idea...the list is endless.

But, instead, your new spirit given to you in your baptism, wants to hear the good news of Christ Crucified over and over again. You want to see the depth of God's wisdom as it all fits together in His Holy Word. And you want to receive this power of God of salvation in the way that He has chosen to give it to you personally through the Lord's Supper.

Again, this seems like foolishness to man. Eating simple bread and drinking wine?

This week, I was browsing Christian music on Youtube, I came across a song beautifully sung by a choir in church in Florida. And the presentation was in high definition on a stage which was beautifully lit, and the lyrics of the song were shown across the whole stage. It was quite the production.

So, I wanted to know more about this church. What does it state as their beliefs. The church's vision is "Engaging People to be Fully Alive in Jesus". Well, of course, through faith in Christ Crucified, a Christian is indeed fully alive as Paul says in Ephesians 2.

"4 But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,"

So, what does this "engaging people to be fully alive" mean? Well, I looked at their belief section on their website and there was a once saved always saved reference, which of course, we know is not true. A believer can lose faith if the seed of faith is choked out by the thorns or dies among the rocks. (Matthew 13, Mark 4, Luke 8)

Then I read about this church's belief about the sacraments. "Baptism and the Lord's Supper are to be observed by the church during the present age. Baptism and the Lords' Supper are acts of obedience to the Lord. Participation in them, though, is not to be regarded in any sense as a means of salvation."

Acts of obedience... man's work it seems... and foolishness to believe that baptism and the Lord's Supper are means of grace. And just skip over that verse in 1 Peter 3:21 "**Baptism now saves us**", and also Matthew 26:28 "

"For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."

Well, I suppose if one believes the false teaching that “once saved always saved,” then one doesn’t need the Lord’s Supper or Baptism. It’s foolishness to believe that Christ’s body and blood are really present. But, Jesus Himself says “This is My Body and take drink this is My blood” and so we believe. (Matthew 26:26-28) And indeed this is how God chooses to “engage” His people to be strengthened in faith to live as salt of the earth and a light to the nations! No staged light show needed! Only God’s precious Word and Sacraments!

“God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.”

Yes, we could not know these things unless the Holy Spirit revealed them to us. Paul even gives the example of not even being able to know what another person is thinking.

“For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him?”

You can’t know what your friend or spouse is thinking. We can’t read each others’ minds. Well, maybe after 50 years of marriage, you might get close to understanding your spouse’s thoughts, but does a friend or a spouse tell you everything? No. So, how could you begin to know the mind of God and His plans Paul asks. You can’t.

But, thanks be to God, He has revealed the mystery of His salvation which He purposed for all mankind – Christ Crucified. And so we heard these beautiful words of the Gospel last week in chapter 1.

“But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption.”

What is Christ’s is ours through faith – His wisdom of salvation, His righteousness that covers all our sins and His sanctification that makes us His salt and light to the world, His redemption that redeems us from this world and gives us eternal life!

So united to Christ are we through our baptism into His death and resurrection that we have as Paul says, “Mind of Christ”. His foolishness through His crucifixion and resurrection is our glory. So, with Paul our speech and proclamation gives all glory to God. **““He who glories, let him glory in the Lord.” (1 Corinthians 1:31) Amen.**

The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your heart and minds through Christ Jesus.” Amen. (Philippians 4:7)