

## 1 Corinthians 2 – “Do You Get It?”

**Introduction:** Paul contrasts the ignorance of the world with the knowledge of God taught by the Spirit.

### 1) What Paul Preaches

- Paul has just finished speaking about the weakness of the Corinthian church, and how God worked powerfully in them, but now he will point to himself and his own weakness and foolishness.
- Paul’s preaching style was unimpressive, and his content was unimaginative. In fact, he didn’t intend to know anything except the message of salvation.

### 2) What the World Understands

- The world thinks the cross is foolishness, we have seen that before. Now, Paul is going to dig even deeper into the root cause. They *cannot* understand the cross.
- This is because God has hidden it from them, and so has caused it to be mysterious (Romans 16:25-17). The blindness of the world to the wisdom of God is proven by the fact that when Jesus Christ himself, the revelation of God, was in front of them they declared him guilty and crucified him (Acts 2:22-23).
- The cross is God’s mystery, part of his plan, and so it can only be understood if God himself reveals it. This is why the people we speak to about the gospel might not be convinced, even by our best efforts. The natural person has no access to the wisdom of God.

### 3) What the Spirit Teaches

- As much as we try, we can’t get into each other’s heads or read each other’s thoughts (1 Samuel 16:7). In the same way, Paul says, we can’t read God’s thoughts. Only God himself knows his thoughts, and it is the role of the Spirit to comprehend the plan of salvation and to teach that plan.
- Those who receive the Holy Spirit are taught the mysteries that direct them to the worship of God. This is the great gift of the Spirit. The result is that we will receive the glory that the gospel promises.
- This perspective destroys all human pride, because this wisdom is not a human accomplishment, the result of clear thinking, or the conclusion of a set of spiritual disciplines. It is purely a gift.

**Conclusion:** When we speak the gospel, we speak spiritual truths with all our effort, praying that God will open unbelieving eyes.

### **Philippians 2:5-11 – “What Did Jesus Do?”**

**Introduction:** Because Christ’s humility produced exaltation, we imitate his humility, looking forward our exaltation.

#### **1) He Had All the Glory**

- One does not become a Christian by imitating Jesus, or being a good person. One becomes a Christian by faith, and it is faith in Christ that saves. At the same time, because we are united to Christ, we do desire to imitate him! (1 Peter 2:20-21)
- Paul wants to point to the external appearance of Christ. This is why he speaks of his ‘form’ (v.6). Of course, Jesus is equal with God (v.6, John 1) but he is going to contrast the form he *was in* with the form he *took on* (v.7).

#### **2) He Gave it All Up**

- Christ did not cling to the external appearance of glory, which was his right, but instead he *emptied* himself. Although there is much debate on this term, Paul makes clear what he means by this in the next two phrases. He took on the form of a man, becoming truly man in addition to his true divinity.
- Jesus didn’t come to earth to live in a palace, he came to be a servant who got no honour at all (Isaiah 53:3). Then he went even lower (v.8). He took on the appearance of the most cursed creature who ever lived, and he did it on purpose (Isaiah 53:4-5; John 10:17-18).
- Paul explains all this to remind us how Jesus willingly humbled himself for our sakes, to encourage us to take that mind ourselves, to be willing to serve our fellow believers.

#### **3) He Was Exalted**

- Because Jesus willingly subjected himself to death, he was exalted to authority over all things (verse 9).
- The world works on the principle of gathering honour for yourself, climbing the social ladder by receiving praise from more and more people. That’s not how honour works in the kingdom of God. God exalted the one who abandoned claim to glory on earth.

- We imitate Christ because we know that we will one day reign with him. That means that we don't value the passing glory of this age, but instead we can seek out those among us who are lonely, hungry, mourning and needy and help them.

**Conclusion:** With Christ's death as our hope and his service as our example, we can serve one another, and the church will become stronger and more united.