Taught by the Spirit

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[0:00] 1 Corinthians chapter 2, tonight we'll be reading verses 1 through 16. And this reading will be from the ESV.

These are God's words. And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom.
For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling.
And my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.
Yet among the mature, we do impart wisdom, although it is not a wisdom of this age, it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age who are doomed to pass away.
[1:07] But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glory. None of the rulers of this age understood this, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

But as it is written, These things God has revealed to us through the Spirit.
For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. 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.
Now we have received not the Spirit of this world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom, but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual.
The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.
[2:26] The spiritual person judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one. For who has understood the mind of the Lord, so as to instruct him?

But we have the mind of Christ. Well, this is our third week now in 1 Corinthians, where we've been camping on the same theme.
But it is a theme that we need to camp on. The wisdom of God. We've seen it many times now, that the wisdom of God is not anything like the wisdom of man.
It is seemingly foolish to man. It is weak in appearance to the natural man. We've seen that in the word of the cross. The message of the cross.
Christ crucified. We've seen that in the people of God themselves. Us. The standards that the world uses to measure greatness mean nothing to God.
[3:32] He accomplishes His purposes. He shows His power. He shows His wisdom in unexpected ways. Using unexpected people to bring a very unexpected message.

So Paul, here in 1 Corinthians, he has been putting God's wisdom on display. Look at it! Here it is! See it in the message! See it in the people! And now we're going to look at two more displays of God's wisdom this evening.
In the human messenger and in the Holy Spirit. Look at the outward proclaiming done by the human messenger. Look also at the inward working done by the Holy Spirit.
So let's look at both the outward and the inward tonight. First, the outward. That proclamation by the human messenger. Let's read again those first five verses to see this display of wisdom.
And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

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[4:44] And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling. And my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men, but in the wisdom of, in the power of God.

So look at the contrasts that Paul is setting before us here. We see the contrast between the wisdom of men and the power of God. And he's showing it from this very particular angle, from the messenger and the demeanor and the speaking style even of the messenger.
You have lofty speech. You have eloquence, contrasted with fear and weakness and much trembling. You have plausible words of wisdom, persuasive words, contrasted with the demonstration of the Spirit and of power.
So the manner of the messenger, the outward style of his speaking even, Paul is saying, I came to you from a human perspective, seemingly weak. And for the Corinthians in their time, the worth of the message was very much tied up with the persuasive oratory skills of the messenger.
If you could give a flowery speech, you were worth listening to. And that's how our world, even today, often operates. Charisma matters to people. People are apt to listen to and to follow and to be persuaded by those who are skilled in public speaking, even if their message is not worth following itself.
[6:25] So Paul is having none of that. He is far more concerned with the substance of his message. In fact, he wants to get out of the way. He wants to have Christ come into sharp focus for those that he was preaching to.

So he didn't come speaking as everyone else did. He wasn't there to win the praise of men. He wasn't there to make a name for himself as this renowned orator.
He is far more concerned with the word of the cross than with his speaking skills. It's as though he has this piece of meat, a nice steak, and he's cutting away that excess fat.
He's removing what isn't needed, what actually might get in the way of the message itself. Now that would be seemingly, or that would be surprising to the Corinthians in their time, for anyone in that time.
How you said something mattered greatly. And here Paul is saying, that isn't my aim. That's not my priority. There is nothing in Paul's way of thinking here that would naturally draw men to his words.
[7:37] Nothing about Paul's outward proclamation that would have proven winsome. He wasn't going to manipulate those that he preached to. He wasn't going to play on their feelings. Here was a man, not full of charisma and charm, but appearing in weakness and in fear and much trembling.

Appearing in weakness, but he brought a powerful message nonetheless. The word of the cross is the power of God.
So from man's perspective, this lack of emphasis on his style, on his natural skill, that's weak. Just like the message that he brings, that is seemingly weak.
The word of the cross, we saw this in chapter one, it's foolish to the world. The world would say, you have this overly simplistic message about a man dying in weakness and shame.
You came with just Jesus Christ and him crucified? That's it? So the manner of the messenger, not focusing on himself, right along with the message that he brought, it just didn't make sense to his hearers.
[8:49] Now that being said, we need to talk about Apollos. Apollos, if you remember, was one of the very men that the Corinthians were tempted to follow.

He was one of the camps that the Corinthians had created. Some were saying, I follow Apollos. And as we talked about in chapter one, we have no indication that any of those men that the Corinthians were elevating were in favor of this happening, or that they even perhaps knew it was happening.
It's not as though Apollos was coming and trying to prove himself to the Corinthians. But the Corinthians were putting him on this pedestal. And it seems that they were probably doing this, at least in part, because he actually was pretty good with words.
He was actually somebody who was a skilled speaker. He was compelling. Apollos is introduced to us in Acts chapter 18. In verse 24, the very first words used to describe him are this.
He was an eloquent man, competent in the scriptures. It's hard not to wonder. Isn't that the very manner of speaking that Paul is criticizing here?
[10:04] Paul didn't come with eloquence. He didn't come with lofty speech. He didn't come as someone who had this natural charisma about himself. People wouldn't think much of his public speaking in Corinth.

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And here in Acts 18, Apollos appeared to be identified as having those very public speaking skills. Seems to be a good thing about him. A skill that he possessed.
So which is it? Does the manner matter or not? Is Paul saying that we need to be dry and boring? That we need to be devoid of expression as the gospel is proclaimed?
Or is some kind of eloquence and skill in speaking acceptable? Or perhaps even helpful? Here's where we need to see. The problem is when that kind of winsome, impressive speech detracts from the message of the cross.
When people are so enraptured by the speaker that they are no longer listening to the word that is being spoken to them. When the manner becomes not just the means to convey the message, but as the end in itself.
[11:18] I knew a man who once preached a sermon and he opened the sermon with an illustration that caught the attention of another. And that other man came to him after and was so impressed by his illustration.

But he said nothing of the sermon. That preacher was discouraged by that. He missed it. It went over him because he got caught up in the words that were said and missed the message that was being brought.
So think about Apollos again. That one verse, Acts 18, 24. He was an eloquent man, competent in the scriptures. Whatever skill he had with words, how was he putting that skill to use?
He was competent in the scriptures. He was able to handle the scriptures using those words that the Lord gave to him.
How about this? Acts 18 goes on to say that he was fervent in spirit. It says that he powerfully refuted the Jews in public speaking. What did he do to refute them?
[12:22] Did he share his worldly wisdom? Did he share all of his bright ideas that he had been meditating on and the philosophies he had come up with in his mind? No, he's showing by the scriptures, Acts 18 says that Jesus is the Christ.

So the way that we use our words matters. Paul isn't saying that skill and style and sophistication are worth nothing. In fact, Paul himself makes some rather sophisticated arguments even in 1 Corinthians.
He uses his words pretty well, even in this letter. Or think about Acts chapter 17 when he went to the Athenians. He had some pretty compelling, persuasive arguments even there.
So using language well is something, but using language well shouldn't be everything. The way we speak can be a wonderful means that God uses to convey his truth, whether he's using those who speak from the pulpit or those of us as we speak to those in our lives.
But the way that we speak should never be the end in itself. Simply attracting people to ourselves. Now remember Paul, again, addressing that problem of following church leaders, putting the emphasis on people rather than on Christ.
[13:49] And so Paul is saying, I don't want followers. I didn't come to you trying to make followers for myself or I would have been way more showy in my rhetorical skills.

So when Paul says, I didn't come to you with plausible words of wisdom. I came to you in demonstration of the Spirit and of power. Or he says, I came to you in demonstration of the Spirit's power.
Well, where's that power of the Spirit wrapped up in? Not in Paul and how he talked, but in the word of the cross, which is the power of God.
The word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved, it is the power of God. Paul's focus was preaching Christ.
And in so doing, that was the display of the Spirit of God and of the power of God. To make proclamation like the world would have resulted in resting our faith in men.
[14:57] The cross would have been emptied of its power because the focus would have shifted from the message to the messenger. So there's many ways that we could think through and apply this as it relates to ourselves.

Here is one in particular we should think on. We must be careful not to be attention seekers. That we aren't carrying ourselves in a way that detracts from the message that we bring.
So wrapped up in how we are communicating the word of the cross, that we get ourselves in the way and become a hindrance to that word being communicated. And again, it's not just in the pulpit.

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That could happen. In everyday conversations, we can be more concerned with how others are perceiving us than with what we have to tell them. We're thinking too much about ourselves and how somebody else is thinking of us and too little of God and how we are representing Him.
What do you care about more? How someone views you or how someone views God. If we are so concerned with exalting ourselves in the eyes of men, it will come at the expense of exalting God.
[16:17] When Paul says, I decided, or even perhaps more strongly, yours may be translated, I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

He's saying, I didn't make much of myself. I did everything I could to get out of the way so that I could show you Jesus Christ and Him crucified.
That's my aim. Look at Him. Don't look at me. Paul had to work to do that. He says, I resolved. It wasn't just going to happen naturally with Him.
And it won't happen naturally with us either. The sin that remains in us loves the idea of making much of ourselves. There is still such pride to be put to death.
So the words at the end of 1 Corinthians 1 need to be ringing in our ears. Let the one who boasts boast in the Lord. Are you resolved to get out of the way?
[17:19] Are you resolved to share Christ even if you aren't perceived as being wise and clever and persuasive by others?

If you aren't resolved, if you aren't putting in the work by the grace that God provides, how that spotlight will shift from God and exalting Him to ourselves.
Whether it's exalting ourselves because we think we're wonderful speakers or perhaps even getting so caught up in realizing and thinking through how we're not wonderful speakers that we're still putting the spotlight on ourselves.
will be more concerned about self than about God and the message of the gospel. So are you overly concerned with words?
Are you overly concerned with being persuasive, with being compelling? Do you wrestle with the thought, I don't have a message to share unless I can share it in a way that will impress other people?
[18:20] But you know what that does? You know what that kind of thinking does? It handcuffs us because we will never feel ready. We will never think ourselves prepared enough to share the gospel.

We'll constantly be thinking through better arguments that we could make or answers to hypothetical questions that we might be asked. And so we become consumed with learning, with being better equipped, with being more prepared and simply never launching.
because we've been convinced that we must operate on the standards of the world when it comes to communication. If I'm not highly skilled, as the world defines highly skilled, in public speaking or debate or persuasion, then I'm not ready to open my mouth and share the good news.
The world loves and elevates those they call experts. And you can't say anything at all if you're not an expert. So if you don't know any, if you're not a doctor, well, you can't speak on health.
If you're not a scientist, you have nothing to say about science. Don't fall into that way of thinking, especially about your faith. I have to meet the world's standard of expertise or I can't say anything.
[19:42] if we are thinking that way, our faith rests in the wisdom of men. I don't want to look foolish in other people's eyes. I don't want to be perceived as unintelligent and simple-minded.

I don't want to get stumped by another person. What if they ask a question that I can't answer? What if they express a criticism that I can address and that I don't know how to address?
Getting so wrapped up in those kinds of thoughts. That is resting your faith in men's wisdom and not in the power of God. So we are not called to be persuasive as the world is persuasive.
However, we are called to prepare. 1 Peter 3.15 is a wonderful verse to pair with 1 Corinthians chapter 2.
1 Peter 3.15 tells us this, but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you.
[20:51] Yet do it with gentleness and respect. So we are called to be ready to give a defense. We are called to be ready to have reasonable answers to share.

but are you putting the emphasis on your own ability to reason or are you putting the emphasis on the one who has given you a reason for the hope that is in you?

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Are you wanting others to find your words compelling or are you wanting to point them to the word of God to say, see how compelling he is? Perhaps we can best answer those kinds of questions when we consider how we respond to rejection.
You share the gospel with someone. You tell them the simple yet profound truth that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. And that person rejects what you've said.
And that person scoffs. And they say, really, that's what you think? Are you disappointed because you've suddenly lost standing in their eyes? Because they respect you less for believing something that they think is so silly like the Bible because your words weren't persuasive enough to win them to your argument.
[22:10] Or are you sad for them that they rejected that message yet contented insofar as you gave a reason for the hope that is in you.

You did what you were called to do. You walked in obedience to the Lord. You gave an answer. And if you didn't have an answer, you said, I'm not sure, but I'm going to get back to you.
And you sought out in the scriptures. You looked for the answer. You perhaps got the help of other Christians to help you to find an answer to give. And you got back to that person. You gave them that answer. You were faithful.
You did what God called you to do. But this person sees you as weak. That's the best answer that you have. How much does that matter to you?
Does it sting you? Do you hate the feeling of losing that person's respect? You want a litmus test for how much eloquence matters to you.
[23:06] How does that rejection affect you when you faithfully shared the truth? When you've given a defense, just as 1 Peter 3 calls us to, with gentleness and respect.

Eloquence can be an aid in sharing the gospel. Eloquence can bring greater clarity of communication. It can be used to refute lies and to stop the mouths of fools.
But we need to be careful because it can also become an idol of the heart that we need to root out because we love the praise of men. Most of us wouldn't be considered the great debaters of this age.
It's probably true. But that's not who God most often uses as His mouthpiece anyhow. Sure, He raises up men and women who can command a room, those like Apollos.
But more often than not, He uses those who speak in weakness and in fear and in much trembling. Just like Paul to the Corinthians. And so we ought to come with a posture of, I'm not here to persuade you to give mental assent to whatever information I have to share.
[24:22] I'm not here to win an argument. I'm not here to impress you with what I have to say. I'm not here to beat you in a game of words and ideas. I'm here to share good news that's aimed at your heart.

And then let's not forget this. This is a great truth. This is a great comfort. This should be a relief to us. We heard of sighing in Mark 7 this morning in sorrow. Here's the sigh of relief that we should have.
We're not the ones who do the work upon the heart. We're the ones who bring the good news that's aimed at the heart, but we're not the ones doing the transformational work in the heart.
That's not our job. That job belongs to someone else. And that's what we see in the second half of our chapter tonight. That brings us to the second display of God's wisdom that we need to look at. The inward illumination by the Holy Spirit. So let's see here that our trust is not in the eloquence of man's words, but in the power of the Holy Spirit.
[25:29] Read again with me, beginning in verse 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, but we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God which God decreed before the ages for our glory.

None of the rulers of this age understood this for if they had they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. 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.
These things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. 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. 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.

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And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual. The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God for they are folly to him and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.
[26:48] The spiritual person judges all things but is himself to be judged by no one. For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.

So Paul has made the point clear. I'm not proclaiming man's wisdom to you. I'm not offering that to you. I'm not here to give that.
I'm not here to impart man's wisdom. He's not concerned about that. We shouldn't be concerned about that either. But that doesn't mean that we shouldn't be concerned with wisdom at all.
There is a wisdom that is being imparted. There is a wisdom that is to be given. It's just not the wisdom that the world would expect. It's not an outward visible form of wisdom.
It's an inward hidden invisible wisdom that's unique to the Holy Spirit and the world can't see it. The world can't recognize it apart from the Spirit's working.
[27:55] Now we've already seen this wisdom on display. This is partly review for us. Paul here is talking about Christ crucified, the message of the cross. in verse 7, this wisdom that is imparted, this wisdom that is not of this age, Paul says, it was decreed from before the ages for our glory.

This secret wisdom. Paul is talking ultimately about God's plan of redemption that finds its central point on Christ.
That plan before the foundations of the world to save His people from their sins by sending His Son. just like we heard this morning what the old covenant people of God were looking forward to.
We now have the privilege to look back on and it is the cross of Christ, the perfect obedient life, the substitutionary death, His offering of Himself up for our sins in our place, His burial, His resurrection.
He is the great remedy to our problem of sin. That is what Paul is talking about here. That is the wisdom of God that the natural man would think. That is foolish. We have seen that in chapter 1.
[29:08] What is new here is not the content or the substance of that. What is new here is the source of our acceptance. Why is it that we who have been called by God, Paul loves talking about being called by God, why is it that we who have been called by God do in fact see and embrace God's wisdom?

Why do we do that? And why is it that others don't? That's what Paul is addressing here, the source of our acceptance. And Paul says, you have received this wisdom because the Spirit has revealed it to you.
You wouldn't have accepted it otherwise because you can't come to understand this wisdom any other way. It's not a wisdom of this age which is passing.
It's transient. The world's wisdom, it will be forgotten and it will be counted as nothing. But the wisdom of God is everlasting. It was decreed before the foundations, before the ages, and it will endure throughout eternity.
That eternal perspective is what Paul has in mind in verse 7 when he says at the very end, for our glory. There certainly isn't glory for the people of God here and now.
[30:32] Paul has just been talking all about the foolishness of wisdom as the world sees it now. Those who cling to the wisdom of God are not esteemed or not exalted, but in eternity this secret wisdom hidden from the world will be made known.

And it will be for our glory. So the wisdom of God doesn't belong to this present fallen age. It has no part in the sinfulness of man.
You won't find it being taught or promoted or held high in the world because it's not a wisdom of this world. It's a wisdom not from men, but of God.
And God must reveal this wisdom to you. those that the world would consider great and powerful, they don't have this wisdom.
They don't understand this wisdom. How do we know that? Because Paul says they would not have crucified the Lord Jesus Christ. They would not have put to death He who they did.
[31:38] They killed Him. They murdered the one who became wisdom to us from God. They spit upon Him. They reviled Him. They wanted nothing to do with Him. They saw Him as a weak man dying a shameful death.

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If they knew and they understood the wisdom of God, they would have done none of that. They would have fallen upon their knees and worshipped Him. But they did not have spiritual eyes to see. Ephesians 4 speaks of those who are outside of Christ as being darkened in their understanding as being alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to their hardness of heart.
Darkened and needing light. Needing what is hidden from them to be revealed. And so what a mercy it is from God in His wisdom to reveal His wisdom to anyone at all.
What a mercy it is that for those of us who are in Christ. He has done that work in us and He does it by His Spirit. Just as verse 10 says, these things, that's the wisdom of God, these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit.
[32:54] So at the heart of the Spirit's work is revelation. He gives us eyes to see. He gives us hearts that are warmed to the truth. He gives us hearts that have understanding of the truth.

This is what we call the illuminating work of the Spirit. He enables us to see. He enables us to understand. He brings light where there was only darkness and confusion before about His Word. So for the Christian, we truly do have light bulb moments where as we read and we study God's Word, we are understanding what we are reading and not just comprehending it.
An unbeliever could take a quiz about the Bible and pass the quiz. They could answer the comprehension questions correctly. The illuminating work of the Spirit is that acceptance of His Word and then that humble, obedient, submission to it as well.
To understand when Paul speaks of understanding is to accept. They're closely related ideas. So the one who fails to understand fails to accept.
[34:05] That's what he says in verse 14. The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God for they are folly to him. Now parallel idea. And he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.

So if they are spiritually discerned, Paul's argument is then only the spiritual person will understand them because the spiritual person has a completely different set of standards for evaluating all things.
What the world deems foolish, the spiritual person deems wise. Now what the world deems wise, the spiritual person deems foolish. That's what Paul's talking about in verse 15.
The spiritual person judges all things but is himself to be judged by no one. Paul's getting at that completely different set of standards. We who are in Christ don't need to worry about the world's standards and being judged by them, being evaluated by those standards.
We aren't subject to those. By the grace of God we can see rightly and we can make judgments concerning all things. We can make proper evaluation of all things.
[35:15] In that sense it's like we've been given a spiritual x-ray vision of sorts that can see and understand things that the natural person simply can't.

Because we who are in Christ are now spiritual people. When Paul says spiritual people he doesn't mean it the way that we might hear that said today.
It's kind of popular. It's kind of in vogue to say that you are spiritual. Someone may not profess to be a Christian. They may not say they have any relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ but they may say I'm spiritual.
That's not the kind of person that Paul is talking about here. Someone who calls himself spiritual but without Christ that is still very much someone who is the natural person that Paul is talking about here.
Only seeing things according to the standards of man. The spiritual person is someone who has been made alive by the Holy Spirit. The spiritual person is someone who has been given understanding by the Holy Spirit to see the wisdom that comes from God.
[36:33] And so the folly of the cross becomes the power of God to you. Going your own way which seemed like wisdom now is foolishness to you.

And so turning to Christ and repentance bowing to Him as Lord that which seemed foolish to you is now your joy and delight and it is the only response that does make sense to you.
Perhaps you are outside of Christ tonight going your own way. Perhaps the Spirit is at work in you this very evening. Do you see the folly of your way?
Do you see that the only true wisdom the only true life is found in Christ? Turn from your sin and trust in Him.

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He's a faithful Savior. He receives all who come to Him. And in that you will perhaps come to realize later the Spirit of God was drawing me to Himself.
[37:38] Even tonight the Spirit of God you look back and say was working in me as He's worked in everyone here who is a Christian. Giving us eyes to see. Giving us hearts to believe. Those who are called by God must have God's wisdom revealed to them by the Spirit.

And the Holy Spirit is well qualified to do this. To be the agent of revelation. Paul gives us the Holy Spirit's resume in verse 11.
The Holy, or perhaps verse 10. The Holy Spirit is able to reveal the thoughts of God. Why is that? Because He is the Spirit of God. He is the third person of the Godhead.
So what the first person of the Godhead, the Father, thinks to intend and to express, He does so by the working of the third person of the Godhead, the Spirit. The Spirit of God is well qualified to share the thoughts of God because He is God.
And no one knows His thoughts better than God Himself. Kids, who knows your thoughts best? The right answer is God.
[38:44] But apart from God, who knows your thoughts best? You do, right? Because they're your thoughts. They live in your head. You are thinking those thoughts.

No other ordinary person can crawl inside your mind and think your thoughts for you, can they? You know your thoughts best. No one else can reveal your thoughts unless you first share your thoughts with them.
Sometimes as parents, we would like to know your thoughts. when you won't share them with us. But we can't know them unless you reveal them to us because they're your thoughts. God knows His thoughts best.
No one else can reveal His thoughts. No one else can know His thoughts. So who better to share His thoughts than God Himself?
That's why the Spirit is so very qualified to reveal God's thoughts to us. No one else could reveal God's thoughts to us just like no one else can reveal your thoughts, kids, without you sharing them.
[39:52] So we read He searches all things. He searches even the depths of God and He reveals those depths to us who are in Christ because we have received the Spirit of God.

Because the Spirit of God now resides in us. So Paul is teaching us here that we don't have the Spirit of this age. If we did, we wouldn't understand the mind of Christ.
If we had the Spirit of this age, we would not understand the things of God. But because we have received the Spirit, we do have understanding. We have been taught by the Spirit what a gift the Spirit of God is to us.
That we might understand the things freely given to us. That we might know, as verse 9 says, what God has prepared for those who love Him.
We could spend so much time talking about what God has prepared for us who love Him. So many spiritual blessings that even now we enjoy.
[40:56] The forgiveness of sins. The Spirit of God residing in us. Reminding us that we are indeed the children of God. I've said the forgiveness of our sins. The power of sin over us.

now broken. So many wonderful blessings of God even now. How many blessings yet to come. The presence of sin gone forever when we're in the presence of God.
Seeing Him face to face. The joy of Him. The delight in Him. No more pain. No more suffering. So many wonderful things we know God has prepared for us.
Have you thought lately though, not just of what has been prepared for us, but of the fact that God has revealed that to you. What a wonder it is. Not just that He's prepared these wonderful blessings for us, but what a wonder it is that He's shared with us what those blessings are.
That He's told us of what those blessings are. That He hasn't kept them hidden from your eyes. Hidden from the eyes of your heart. That's the first wonder of them all.
[42:01] You who are beloved by God know what God has prepared for you. He's told you what He's prepared for you in His Word. And it's what the natural man in his foolish thinking could never imagine, he could never conceive of in his own mind.

But God in His grace has revealed it to you. Over and over again, as we've been in 1 Corinthians, we've been humbled.
We've been brought low. It is God who called you to Himself. It is the Spirit who revealed God and His wisdom to you. There is no room for boasting.

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There is no room for pride. Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord. So the outward proclamation by the human messenger and the inward illumination by the Holy Spirit.
I hope we see this wonderful relationship between these two displays of God's wisdom tonight. And that relationship is this. As we hear the Word of God itself proclaimed, as we read the Word of God, we know and we understand it to be exactly what it is, the wisdom of God, only because the Spirit has revealed this to us and He's given us that heart level understanding.
[43:27] That is a supernatural work. that we have been given the mind of Christ. So what a gift the Holy Spirit is to us.

Let's pray together. Father, we give You praise that You have looked upon undeserving sinners and that You have redeemed us in Your grace and that You have given us Your Spirit, that Your Spirit first caused us to be born again that we might then repent and believe.
that Your Spirit continues to work in us even as we go to read Your Word in our quiet time. Remind us even this week that we need Your Spirit to teach us, to open our eyes, to understand what You say.
And then Father, we pray that You would embolden us as we go to a lost world sharing the good news of salvation. We pray that as we speak to those in our lives that we would have boldness and courage knowing that it is Your Spirit who works in the hearts of men and women and boys and girls.
So make us faithful in our sharing. We pray, Father, that we would come with a message even if it's met with scoffing, with scorn.
[44:44] We pray, Father, that You would still make us to be faithful and obedient to You. We thank You that Your Spirit goes with us, that He guides us, that He is at work in us and through us.

We pray these things in Christ's name. Amen. Romans 15-13 May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit, you may abound in hope.

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