**Gifted Sight!**

**1 Corinthians 2:14-16**

Online Sermon: <http://www.mckeesfamily.com/?page_id=3567>

For some the Bible is the linguistic medium in which God chooses to communicate His personal love letter to humanity. The words are full of Spirit, life (John 6:63) and flawless truth (Psalms 12:6; John 17:17). They are sharper than any two edged sword, for its precepts judge the thoughts and attitudes of the heart (Hebrews 4:12) not with the intent of destroying one in hell (2 Peter 3:9) but to offer salvation to all whom believe (John 3:16) and partake in the living waters and bread of life (John 7:38, 6:25-59)! Even though His word constantly convicts them of their sins (2 Timothy 3:15-17) they still meditate (Psalms 119:47-48) and see it as a light (Psalms 119:105) that through confession (1 John 1:9) and obedience (James 1:21-23) equips them to rightly serve and please their Creator. To others the Bible is nothing more than whimsical nonsense written by a bunch of sinful authors about a realm that cannot be seen and therefore in their minds does not exist! For them the words do not leap off the page as if they had any meaning but represent a bunch of sayings that merely restrict human freedom. They see the Bible as nothing more than a mere fantasy of simpletons and bigots. How can two different groups of people read the same love letter and yet one sees it as the source of their lives and the other as yesterday’s trash? This sermon is going to answer that question by exploring in 1 Corinthians 2:14-16 Apostle Paul’s statement that only those with the Spirit can rightly discern and understand the word of God!

**Natural Person’s Limitations (verse 14)**

**The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit**

 Apostle Paul begins this section by stating that those whom do not have the Spirit of God cannot help but see His words as mere “dreams of simpletons.” [[1]](#footnote-1) It is not a lack of intellect, [[2]](#footnote-2) riches or even good deeds[[3]](#footnote-3) that keeps this “natural person” [[4]](#footnote-4) from understanding or positively responding to God’s love letter[[5]](#footnote-5) but their carnal nature and reprobate minds. Their “soulish human nature” [[6]](#footnote-6) inherited from Adam[[7]](#footnote-7) has been corrupted and entangled by sin (Hebrews 12;1)[[8]](#footnote-8) and as a result is incapable of comprehending the significance of the light of God’s glory (John 1:5)[[9]](#footnote-9) that shines all around us. Such a person is “volitionally prejudiced” against the truth concerning God because their “unregenerate appetites”[[10]](#footnote-10) to gratify the sinful desires of their hearts has made them spiritually blind (James 1:14-15). While they can know of God and therefore are accountable to respond rightly (Romans 1:20),[[11]](#footnote-11) until they possess a “higher nature” than they received from Adam[[12]](#footnote-12) they will not be able to receive the wisdom of God’s love letter “regardless of their intellectual abilities or human accomplishments (1:20).”[[13]](#footnote-13)

 It is not a lack of intellect that keeps the natural person from knowing God but the attitude of his/her heart! Not only is said person unequipped to discern the activities and word of God[[14]](#footnote-14) but in his/her “natural condition he/she cannot prefer Christ over their self-glorifying attitude!”[[15]](#footnote-15) Even when they read about how “death can be destroyed, the grave swallowed up and life and immortality brought to life”[[16]](#footnote-16) by being forgiven,[[17]](#footnote-17) transformed and adopted into God’s family; this unmerited grace remains foolishness to them and not worth understanding![[18]](#footnote-18) It is not that their ability to discern the basic truths concerning God is lost[[19]](#footnote-19) but that the “evil inclinations and wicked principles” by which they live their lives[[20]](#footnote-20) makes them unwilling to “enter into the mind of God, in the spiritual matters of His kingdom, and yield to their force and power.”[[21]](#footnote-21) Morally such a person refuses to assign the right value to God’s love letter[[22]](#footnote-22) because that would mean giving up self-reliance, self-exaltation[[23]](#footnote-23) and the autonomy of choosing[[24]](#footnote-24) to live their lives to gratify their own sinful pleasures. How foolish they are to cherish low, earthly sinful values[[25]](#footnote-25) over the life saving power of the Gospel!

 Not only does the natural person lack the nature to value God’s love letter but according to Spurgeon they also lack the “organs” to do so.[[26]](#footnote-26) Imagine taking a blind person to the Sistine Chapel and then wondering why he/she did not appreciate the amazing artwork or imagine taking a deaf person to a theater performing Handel’s Messiah and wondering why he/she did not enjoy the symphony? Why would such persons be willing to spend their time or money to see what for them is unseeable or hear what for them is unhearable? [[27]](#footnote-27) One of the main reasons why the natural man perceives God’s love letter as mere foolishness is that he/she cannot see or hear the value and transforming power of His words![[28]](#footnote-28) “The eye of the Christian is his faith; but the natural man, being destitute of a living faith in the living Saviour, is like a man without eyes. He says it is foolish; it is nothing to him.”[[29]](#footnote-29) For the natural person to truly understand the love letter takes an incredible leap of faith that once his/her will is surrendered to God, He will heal his/her spiritual blindness and deafness by transforming them into a redeemed child and heir of His kingdom! [[30]](#footnote-30)

**Spiritual Person’s Understanding (verses 15-16)**

 The moment a person becomes born again and the Spirit of God enters them they become able to rightly discern the things of God.[[31]](#footnote-31) No longer does such a person evaluate God’s love letter based merely on human standards which are only interested in self-glorification[[32]](#footnote-32) but is guided by the Spirit in the truth concerning the spiritual things of God’s kingdom.[[33]](#footnote-33) The Spirit whom knows God’s thoughts is the infallible arbiter of the wisdom of the cross[[34]](#footnote-34) and its radical indictment[[35]](#footnote-35) “of our desperate helplessness and on the other hand the all-sufficiency and beauty of Christ crucified.”[[36]](#footnote-36) This does not mean that born again believers are infallible interpreters of God’s love letter[[37]](#footnote-37) or that studying God’s word is no longer necessary,[[38]](#footnote-38) for believers still sin and see dimly what will be made clear later (1 Corinthians 13:12). Unlike the natural person the spiritual one is able to accept, obey and perceive the commands of God[[39]](#footnote-39) not as mere foolishness but words of love from their Creator, a source of infinite joy[[40]](#footnote-40) that when following will lead to right living and pleasure in Him![[41]](#footnote-41)

 In relation to the things of God “the power of spiritual discernment means freedom from human scrutiny.” [[42]](#footnote-42) John 3:20 states that the natural person who does evil will not approach the light because of fear that their evil deeds will be exposed. Such a person not only hates the light but also tends to hate those whom have received the Spirit of God (John 15:8). We whom are born again are not to be concerned with “mere human judgments that ridicule Jesus’ death”[[43]](#footnote-43) but are to focus on giving every effort possible to use the spiritual gifts God we have received to please Him (Hebrews 13:21). Through the power of the Holy Spirit we can judge rightly about all things[[44]](#footnote-44) and therefore our thoughts, words and deeds can fulfill His command to be Holy (1 Peter 1:16). To be able to not only comprehend God’s love letter but to be obedient to God’s revelation (Philippians 2:5–8)[[45]](#footnote-45) is truly a treasure and pearl of infinite value!

 At the end of this passage Apostle Paul rejoices born again believers have received the mind of Christ.[[46]](#footnote-46) “The *mind of Christ*, is God’s profound wisdom regarding salvation through a crucified Messiah which was hidden but is now revealed by the Holy Spirit.”[[47]](#footnote-47) We as believers are not to view ourselves as elitists that have obtained special, revealed knowledge through our own merit or superior intellect[[48]](#footnote-48) but as redeemed masterpieces of God’s grace that were once blind and now see! Praise be to God that those who have passed from death to life are now able to, albeit within limits, “view and assess things the way Christ does!”[[49]](#footnote-49) This means that our mindset[[50]](#footnote-50) is no longer focused on gratifying our sinful pleasures with the things of this world but on seeking first the kingdom of God (Matthew 6:33) that is both a present and future reality (Luke 1:20-37)!

**How to Become Born Again**

 If the cross is foolishness to you and there is an eternity between you and the regenerate, born again believer[[51]](#footnote-51) then please pay attention to the last portion of this sermon! The same power that raised Christ[[52]](#footnote-52) from the dead can command your bones and very soul to come to life.[[53]](#footnote-53) The words of the cross is not just about Christ’s crucifixion it is about yours![[54]](#footnote-54)  To become born of the Spirit you must see being part of God’s kingdom as being infinitely more valuable than your self-exaltation and gratifying the sinful desires of your heart. Please do not be fooled into thinking that entrance into God’s kingdom can be obtained through good deeds or by reading the Bible, praying or attending church. While these certainly go a long way towards fulfilling Jesus’ command to follow Him, salvation cannot be obtained without taking the first and crucial step called faith! It is by believing that Christ died to atone for one’s sins and the surrendering of one’s will to Christ that one becomes a new creation and adopted into God’s family (Romans 10:9). So, if you want to be part of God’s family and read His love letter with the mind of Christ then pray from the heart this prayer:

**Lord Jesus please forgive me for wanting to live my life my way. While I am a sinner not deserving to be saved, I plead to Your mercy to save a wretch like me. I believe in my heart that You Jesus were crucified for my sins and were raised from the dead so that I might be saved this very day! Jesus take control and be the Lord of my life. I thank You for Your grace and mercy and for accepting me as one of Your children. Now that I am saved teach me to follow you from now and forever, amen!**

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