**1 Corinthians 2:1-16**

And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. **2** For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. **3** And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling, **4** and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, **5** that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God. **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. **7** But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glory. **8** None of the rulers of this age understood this, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. **9** 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”— **10** these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. **11** 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. **12** 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.

**“Lining Up Sights On Christ”**

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen. Many rejoice over a most glorious event today. Rather than celebrating the day of our Lord’s resurrection, which is what the church does every Sunday. The event today comes with important names, big money, and a lot at stake. Super Bowl 51 today has had plenty of lofty speech, analyzing of stats, and more than enough commentators. Even the last 18 years spirituality has joined the mix with, “The Super Bowl Gospel Celebration.” It is the only NFL sanctioned Gospel concert. Yet, this attempt by pop-Christianity to be in the limelight has a cost. The slogan, “Where faith meets football” gets the attention, while Jesus and His cross sits on the sidelines.

When Paul wrote to those Christians in Corinth, they were also caught up in the glory of that culture. This city located on a major travel route and seaport drew all kinds of people and spiritualties. Of course, to the Greek culture Christianity fell into that category of foolishness. The busyness of life, riches in trade, and famous teachers clouded out the Gospel. Rather than trying first to address the issues that the Corinthian church had, Paul went to that glory no other would dare to endorse. He said, “For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.” Here is the light that will pierce the darkness! The unfading glory of Christ crucified is God’s wisdom that shines upon us.

1. **God gives an attitude far different than the wisdom of men.**
2. Paul knew how he had established the church in Corinth.

* He told them, “And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom.”
* This testimony of God was “the mystery” God graciously had revealed even to a learned Pharisee like Paul.
* Another wisdom exists for, “What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him.”
* The Spirit of God converted Paul by way of divine revelation and Paul brought that same Spirit in his preaching to Corinth.

1. Attitudes toward human wisdom today is what gets the attention.

* With new discoveries and information, the holiness of God’s Word has lost the ultimate say.
* Lofty speech and wisdom is entertaining and inspiring, while the church has a changeless Gospel for a world trapped in sin and death.
* Despising the Word and Sacrament is to miss, “secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glory.”
* This is the Spirit of God seeking to save sinners by baptism into Jesus and the baptized living by the Spirit with what we receive alone from Jesus.

1. **God uncovers an insight more powerful than the wisdom of men.**
2. Paul saw how the Christians in Corinth were caught up in the moment.

* The rule of Roman power allowed for a certain glory of extravagance, selfishness, and much wickedness.
* Yet, what God gave in Christ delivered from eternal judgment and death, “not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to pass away.”
* Jewish rulers and even Roman governs in their glory did not realize God had used them to carry out His will to crucify the Lord of glory.
* None grasped this power of God, but the Spirit made it known and it came to Corinth by the preaching of Paul.

1. Since life is only what we know today, we are caught up in the moment.

* Nothing has changed, “no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.”
* If we rely only on our understanding and not Scripture, doubt and disbelief is all the sinful mind knows of God.
* When experience and personal ideas are supreme, we make God into a mascot serving our plans and demands.
* The best insight is how the Spirit calls us back to Scripture to know what God promises, “Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the straps of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke?”

1. **God centers life on glory that shines greater than the wisdom of men.**
2. Paul reveals the heart of the matter that rests on the Spirit and power of God.

* The Church’s identity and mission came down to this, “For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.”
* Whatever Law, works, glory and anything else for life, everything came back and stood upon Jesus and His sacrifice.
* What the Romans saw as a disgrace and shame, the crucified Christ was to be their righteousness and comfort.
* Paul’s own life shined with the light of the cross refusing any other preaching, so “faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.”

1. Jesus Christ and Him crucified is the heartbeat of the Church.

* What stands at the center is how God reveals and extends His love to any in a sinful world.
* It is more than knowing “Jesus died on the cross” or just talking about Him.
* This is the glorious light where God’s love keeps proclaiming forgiveness by His Word so no sin, death, or devil has any say upon our life.
* The Lord of glory is Christ in the sacrament who by His body and blood sustains us to shine by bearing our crosses and helping others to carry them.

For all the hype of Super Bowl 51, it goes away just as fast. St. Paul had no desire to have that happen to the Gospel in Corinth. Christ crucified is better than a concert or even a 30-second funny commercial. Here is the hope that remains for all times and place. The truth God has risen up and made right for sinners. What the Church proclaims every Sunday is the Spirit and power of God the world cannot give. This unfading glory of Christ crucified is God’s wisdom that shines upon us. Amen. Now the peace of Christ that passes all understanding be with your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus to life everlasting. Amen.