

The Wisdom of Eternal Living

1 Cor 2:1-12

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The streets of Corinth are bustling with activity.

A retired Roman soldier takes his pension allotment to the market and picks up the seeds, dried figs, and mead that will supply his food stores for the week.

A house slave takes his master's billing and accounting statements to his master's creditors to demand their payment on their debts.

And a woman carries her child on her hip as she searches for the cloth with that fine purple dye that will suffice for the new dress she wants to make for her sister's upcoming wedding.

It's a normal day in the shops for them, not unlike a normal day for us at the supermarket, or department store. It's just where everyone goes to get what they need when they live in the busy port city of Corinth.

What's different is the shops that have little figurines representing the Roman and Greek God's that many people worshipped in little shrines in their homes.

The people didn't have a means of transportation like we do today, not even a horse, or donkey to ride on, for those were dedicated to outside of the city travel and for use on the farms or wine presses.

And the people would encounter Sophists in the streets using rhetoric and lofty speech to basically entertain the people, with concepts that were nothing to think about normally or consider worthy of wasting any time discussing.

Yet their lofty speech and word salad combinations would draw the young mothers in, catch the attention of the retired Roman Soldiers and give pause to the household slaves giving them a moment of mindless distraction.

Plato and Socrates saw it for what it was and realized it was a departure from the virtue and wisdom they were espousing, but like so many things intellectual and educational true wisdom literature and speaking lost the spotlight to the infantile, say nothing, but do it in an entertaining way to the masses who were attracted to listening without thinking.

It's difficult for us to understand why the 2nd Sophistic movement gained popularity, unless...you look at your media usage on your phone and see just how much time you have spent looking at

short videos of people dancing on tic toc, or subscribed to videos on Instagram of people travelling in vans to exotic points of interest, or find ways to just distract yourself from the moment by catching up on posted pictures of yet another smiling selfie or just a picture of a plate of food.

We love to look and listen, without thinking.

This is exactly what Paul is talking about when he says he didn't come to them with lofty speech or wisdom.

Now, Wisdom here is not educated, learned, or derived from the great library of Alexandria. No, Paul is talking about these Sophists who, ironically enough, are little concerned with real wisdom.

It's as if Paul is saying, "I Didn't come to you with a tic toc video dancing to get your attention, I didn't tell you about the beautiful mountain pass I watched a sunset from, I didn't even tell you about the great meal I had at Thaddeus's house on the way into town."

No, I came to you with one message and one message alone.

I didn't come to impress you with how I am preaching, I am coming to you with *WHO* I am preaching above all else.

I am preaching Christ crucified for the redemption of your souls from sin.

(PAUSE)

And I love how Paul approaches the Good News of Christ Jesus, with fear and trembling.

Fear in the sense of respect for what he is responsible for, speaking the Word of God clearly in terms people can understand which means eternal life and eternal death if they don't believe what he is telling them.

Trembling, like the moment when someone is asking in a group, "what do you believe?" Knowing what comes out of your mouth next could be accepted, rejected, ridiculed, celebrated, or worst of all, simply ignored.

No matter what you know; what the Word of God says is powerful; some for life, and some for eternal death.

Or trembling like the young pastor holding up the sacrament for the first time for his people, knowing it is not him, but the very Body and Blood of the Lord that does the active work of forgiving sins and strengthening faith, but if the pastor is unfaithful in his duty to distribute his Lord to those who are worthy communicates, he just might be facilitating in their judgement.

(1 Corinthians 11:29)

The African American Spiritual, “Were you there” captures the spirit of Paul’s trembling perfectly as we consider our Savior; “Michael would you play us a little intro?” Sing the first verse with me.

Were you there when they crucified my Lord? (were you there)
Were you there when they crucified my Lord (were you there)
Oh...sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble...
Were you there when they crucified my Lord? (Were you there)

Oh how I have seen grown, powerful men reduced to tears at the power of the cross to redeem from the sins they were so ashamed of.

Oh how I have seen Colonels and Generals with the power of tanks, missiles and the deadliest force in nature the Grunt Infantry Soldier, under their command and all doing their bidding at their word, trembling, before the true power of the universe, our King Jesus.

But I have also seen fools rise up with nothing to say, and remove people from social media because they said, “No Other King but King Jesus”

Oh, they will leave verified terrorists, anti-Semites, and even self-avowed child predators spewing their know nothing nonsense without restriction, but if you tell people that Jesus saves them from their sins they ban you because they fear you above everything else.

Why?

Because deep down, in their know nothing souls, they know it’s true, and they will have to concede that they are not your overlords, they are not the top of the cultural food chain and they are not even in charge of themselves.

For when one believes in the love and forgiveness that Jesus won for them on the cross, then they are forgiven, and He becomes their Lord; and what Our Lord says, we believe, teach, and confess in our daily living from there on out.

As Paul says UTIOTHIS in verse 5, “Having therefore our Faith, not in the wisdom of men, but rather in the power of God.”

And knowing we have that power in God, as Paul says in verse 9, we now do “what God prepared for the ones who love Him!”

This beautiful Word of God is our daily devotion to how we live our lives in the Grace of God!

No longer do we let our lives be driven by the drivel of this world and its determination to drive us away from Christ.

No, we devote ourselves to all that brings us closer to Christ as revealed through the Holy Spirit who searches all the things of God and inspires them, in us, to do.

Giving, living, believing, and striving for the things of God by:

Building the community of Christ by lifting up young people for full time work in the kingdom of God! How many young men will make faithful pastors one day, how many young women will make faithful deaconesses, teachers, DCE's and DCO's?

Giving, so they can be given the opportunity by the spirit of God to follow through on their calling without the distraction of having to find the money to do so!

Living our lives each and every day, knowing who our Savior is and knowing He sent the helper, the Holy Spirit, who will guide everything we do through the Word of God and His Holy Sacraments.

Believing, that He is indeed coming soon to this unwise and perverse generation, so we must love those believing that which is unwise so they can receive the wisdom of God instead.

Striving every year, day, and minute to live the *Next 5 Minutes* like it's the last five minutes of our lives, as Stephen Curtis Chapman says in his song.

If the Lord came right now, would you be embarrassed by what you are doing or would He find you doing His Kingdom Work?

At Faith we say, "Yes He will, because we will do everything as unto the Lord!"

Yes, the world is full of distracting, nonsensical, time-wasting know-nothing drivel.

But you are full of Christ, who was graciously gifted to us, and has given us the wisdom of eternal living!

AMEN

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