

## 神的智慧（三、制造合一的智慧）——哥林多前书1:22-25

# The Wisdom of God, Part 3, The Unity-Producing Wisdom— 1 Corinthians 1:22-25

### *Introduction and Outline*

- Scripture Reading: 1 Corinthians 1:10–31

#### **1 Corinthians 1:22–25** (NASB1995)

<sup>22</sup> For indeed Jews ask for signs and Greeks search for wisdom; <sup>23</sup> but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block and to Gentiles foolishness, <sup>24</sup> but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. <sup>25</sup> Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

- **【Heart Examination】** What do you **truly want to get** from the church? What **motive**, what **goal**, made you come to church this morning instead of doing other things? What **attracts you here**?

**【Common Wrong Answers】** To appear morally good; to gain social acceptance; to get connections and resources for career development; to feel religiously fulfilled so there won't be a God-shaped hole in your heart...

**【Suggested Answer】** It is simply because the message proclaimed here is that Christ was crucified for our sins. We proclaim that we are completely worthless, filthy, sinful, with no merit or virtue to boast—but I can **boast in Christ crucified together with my brothers and sisters**, and that is **the greatest joy in my heart!**

**【Connection】** Today's Scripture teaches us: **If we pursue any other goal in the church, we will bring ruinous destruction to the relationships among brothers and sisters!**

- Outline:

Title: The Wisdom of God, Part 3, The Unity-Producing Wisdom (vv.22-25)

1. Consider the Tragedy of Absalom (2 Samuel 13-18)
2. Division from Lack of Wisdom (v.22)
3. Central Message of Wisdom (v.23)
4. Unifying Power of Wisdom (v.24)
5. Supreme Source of Wisdom (v.25)

## **Consider the Tragedy of Absalom (2 Samuel 13-18)**

- Superficial solutions cannot resolve relational problems; we must address the root causes. In the tragedy of Absalom, the son of David, the emotional buildup and eruption of hatred seem to be a recurring theme. For example:

【Event 1】 After Amnon violated Tamar, "But Absalom did not speak to Amnon either good or bad; for Absalom hated Amnon because he had violated his sister Tamar." (2 Samuel 13:22). The two brothers **deadlocked into a cold war for two years, with no effort to restore their relationship**. Two years later, Absalom killed Amnon at the dining table.

【Event 2】 Following the incident, Absalom fled in fear and **hid in a foreign country for three years, with no attempt to reconcile with his family**. Three years later, prompted by Joab, David brought Absalom back to Jerusalem but **refused to see him** and simply **shut him in his house** (2 Samuel 14:23–24). In Absalom's heart, **hatred continued to brew**, and it erupted again two years later, setting fire to Joab's field (2 Samuel 14:28–30).

【Event 3】 Finally, David agreed to see Absalom. Not only did they meet, but Absalom also "bowed down with his face to the ground before the king, and the king kissed Absalom" (2 Samuel 14:33). It seems that their relationship was restored, and they got along peacefully. However, the events in chapter 15 and following reveal that this reconciliation was **nothing but a show**; the **underlying relational issue remained unresolved**.

【Conclusion】 When we have relational problems, we must find out the root causes and strive to solve them instead of merely dealing with the problem superficially. This is especially true for important relationships: such as those within the family and within the church.

【Connection】 This is why Paul dedicates no less than four chapters in 1 Corinthians to addressing relational issues. Relationships within the church are particularly important because they testify to our God's grace in saving us. Unity in the church demonstrates our understanding of God's forgiving grace and reflects the glorious image of the Triune God.

【Key Message Summary】 There are two kinds of wisdom: human wisdom leads to division; God's wisdom leads to unity.

## **Division from Lack of Wisdom (v.22)**

- "For indeed Jews ask for signs and Greeks search for wisdom": When everyone is seeking different things, of course, there's no unity.

**Isaiah 53:6** "All of us like sheep have gone astray, Each of us has turned to his own way..."

【The Truth】 Whether seeking signs or wisdom, the underlying motive or goal is all about self-glorification. There are as many "selves" as there are people, and so as many different

goals for boasting as well. The Jews' pursue signs, yet no sign can give them unity; the Greeks pursue wisdom, yet no wisdom can give them unity. For none of them knows God's wisdom, and they all want to boast in themselves. This is exactly what "each of us has turned to his own way" means.

【Biblical Example】 **Saul and David** had a very good relationship at the beginning; they fought side by side, united as one, and pursued the same goal: to defeat the Philistines. However, after the victory, Saul heard a group of women singing, “Saul has struck down his thousands, and David his ten thousands.” Saul was immediately furious! From that moment, Saul viewed David as a rival, ultimately seeking to kill him. Just because **David took his glory!** Superficially, both were pursuing victory, yet when one of them pursued it to the end of self-glory, there can be no true unity between them.

【Conclusion】 Anyone seeking self-glory is a relationship murderer. Regardless of what they pursue, if the ultimate goal is self-exaltation rather than praising Christ for the power of His cross and acknowledging their own weakness, they'd all become relationship murderers.

【Practical Example】 In the church, individuals may pursue **theological knowledge, evangelism, sharing testimonies, or fostering genuine love for each other**—all good endeavors. However, if these pursuits are driven by a **desire for self-glory** and boasting about their abilities, they can become **detrimental to relationships.**

【Analysis of Non-Believers Rejecting Jesus】 People often reject Jesus because they want something so they can boast. The message of the cross, however, leaves no room for self-boasting. Because the cross requires us to admit that **all that we have results in nothing but the crucifixion of the Son of God.** What a glorious achievement! How worthy of praise! The cross compels us to acknowledge that **we deserve the punishment He bore.** For those intent on self-exaltation, this truth is totally unacceptable, so they reject Jesus.

【The Irony】 Jews seek signs, and the cross is the greatest sign; Greeks seek wisdom, and the cross is the most perfect wisdom. Yet, they reject the cross because **their true pursuit is personal glory.**

### Central Message of Wisdom (v.23)

- "But we preach Christ crucified": This is the essence of true wisdom, God's wisdom. At its core lies the message of Christ crucified. This message is remarkably simple, not complex at all; even a three-year-old can understand. God incarnate was crucified to atone for the sins of those who believe in Him. This is the message we proclaim.

【A Word of Caution】 When a church's message gradually deviates from the central theme of Christ crucified, what remains is nothing but all kinds of prideful self-boasting. Only by constantly emphasizing the core message of the cross can we gradually eliminate our sinful tendency to boast. Remove the cross, and the sin of pride will inevitably flourish, leading to

everyone pursuing their own avenues for self-glory. Church division then becomes only a matter of time.

**【An Encouragement】 Even though the message of the cross is utterly boring to non-believers, causing them to go away claiming, "Christianity isn't for me", true believers in such a church can live out lives marked by humility, unity, and love.**

### **The Unifying Power of Wisdom (v.24)**

- “But to those who are the called... Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God”: When Christ is preached correctly, those who are truly called by God will say: Yes, this is the power of God, the wisdom of God! This is exactly what we pursue and boast about! We don't have to think about how to boast ourselves anymore, Hallelujah!

**【Release】 Self-boasting is the heaviest burden - constantly calculating how to present oneself as glamorous and make others notice one's excellence - what a heavy burden this is! When we come before the cross of Christ, this burden completely falls off!**

- “Both Jews and Greeks”: These were the two groups with the worst cultural division at the time. Yet, when Christ is preached correctly, even Jews and Greeks can unanimously declare: “Praise be to God, this is the power of God, this is the wisdom of God!” This exemplifies the unifying power of wisdom. Would there still be divisions and factions? Certainly not.

**【A Word of Caution】 However, when the cross is not clearly present in our hearts, all we see are external differences such as ethnicity, culture, language, gender, age, occupation, interests and hobbies, and so on. The church then degenerates into a collection of interest groups, connected only by external mutual attractions, lacking the inner spiritual cohesion that true unity requires.**

### **Supreme Source of Wisdom (v.25)**

- “Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men”: Even the little finger of God is much thicker than a man's waist, right?

**【Application】 This is why I only preach the Word of God here and not the wisdom words of any mere man. I believe God is always wiser than I. He knows better what words to use to build His church. His words are always wiser, stronger, and more powerful to save souls than the best words I can think of. So I insist on preaching only the Bible.**

#### **Summary Application**

What is it that you truly want to get from the church? Do you now realize what kind of impact your inner pursuit will have on your interpersonal relationships, the unity of the church, and the glory of God?