**Without God’s Spirit We Would Be Blind So We Shouldn’t Boast about Our Eyesight**

1 Corinthians 2

Most people want to be perceived as intelligent. Or, at the very least, people do not like to be perceived as fools.

Last week as we studied 1 Corinthians 1, we learned that the things that the world calls wise, God calls foolish and often times the things that God calls wise, the world calls foolish.

This understanding can sometimes cause Christians to puff up a bit. As one of my friends often points out to me…Christians can think they are better than other people because they “walk in the way of wisdom.” And other people “suffer the way of fools.”

As Christians, we may be tempted to treat others as inferior, or blind, or lost, or fools who don’t know anything. I’m here to tell you this is not right. There is a reason why the lyrics to Amazing grace go something like…

Amazing Grace how sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me
I once was lost, but now I'm found
Was blind but now I see

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear
And grace my fears relieved
How precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believed

I’m here today to tell you, we are fools without the grace of our Lord Jesus, and we are (just as) blind as the rest of the world…if not for God’s Spirit.

There is an old saying that is attributed to John Bradford a sixteenth century minister who said…

“There but for the grace of God, goes John Bradford.”

You want to know when he said it? He said it when he, as a free man, watched a group of prisoners being led to an execution. He understood that if it wasn’t for God’s grace, he too, could see himself as one who was being led to be executed.

When explaining the phrase “But for the grace of God,” Wiktionary writes…

* This proverb is an expression of humility; in using it, a speaker acknowledges that outside factors (such as [God](https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/God)'s [grace](https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/grace), or one's [upbringing](https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/upbringing)) have played a role in one's success in life.
* Used also to express that one cannot judge others for their flaws for we are all equally flawed.

As we continue in the book of 1 Corinthians today I hope that each of us will come face to face with the knowledge that any true eyesight, foresight and wisdom that we have is but for the grace of God.

After all, if it weren’t for the grace of God we would be in the group of people being led to a cosmic execution. Do you believe it?

If we believe it, then we have absolutely no reason to cast stones at blind people.

Don’t you think throwing stones at blind people would be considered an act of bullying? I think this is a huge part of why non-believers hate Christians, it is because often times we are bullies. Instead of calling blind people blind, we are to use the wisdom that God has given us to show compassion and love to people so that, they too can see God’s grace with clarity.

There is a huge difference between showing the world how good God is and making sure others know how good we are.

If you remember last week we finished with Paul writing…

“**31**Therefore, as it is written: “Let the one who boasts boast in the Lord.”

1 Corinthians 1:31

Only with this in mind can we have the correct context for chapter 2…

**“2**And so it was with me, brothers and sisters. When I came to you, I did not come with eloquence or human wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. **2**For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. **3**I came to you in weakness with great fear and trembling. **4**My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit’s power, **5**so that your faith might not rest on human wisdom, but on God’s power.

**6**We do, however, speak a message of wisdom among the mature, but not the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. **7**No, we declare God’s wisdom, a mystery that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began. **8**None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. **9**However, as it is written:

“What no eye has seen,
    what no ear has heard,
and what no human mind has conceived”—
    the things God has prepared for those who love him—

**10**these are the things God has revealed to us by his Spirit.

The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. **11**For who knows a person’s thoughts except their own spirit within them? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. **12**What we have received is not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may understand what God has freely given us. **13**This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words. **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. **15**The person with the Spirit makes judgments about all things, but such a person is not subject to merely human judgments, **16**for,

“Who has known the mind of the Lord
    so as to instruct him?”

But we have the mind of Christ.”

1 Corinthians 2:1-16

With the wrong understanding of this it could be easy to pride ourselves as those who know the way, or walk in true wisdom, or have the mind of Christ. After all, doesn’t Paul write that the Spirit searches all things and helps us to understand the things God has freely given us?

But for the grace of God…we would go the way of the world. And, in fact, I would contend that even with the grace of God we still have tendencies to go the way of the world.

For that matter, it is important to note that the same Paul who just told us of God’s revelations also wrote that…

 **9**For we know in part and we prophesy in part, **10**but when completeness comes, what is in part disappears. **11**When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me. **12**For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

1 Corinthians 13:9-12

Everything we think we know is just part of what we will know.

And every “Blind” and “Lost” soul should be like a sermon illustration that preaches “But for the grace of God there go I.”

Who do you despise?

For whom do you think there is no forgiveness?

What is that terrible sin **you** would never commit?

Admit today…”But, for the grace of God,” we would or could easily travel that path. For some of us, we did travel that path and we still find it in us to condemn another who is on it now.

Paul once wrote:

**9**For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. **10**But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them—yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me.

1 Corinthians 15:9-10

Paul worked hard, but attributed who he was to God’s grace, not to his work. Why?

Because he knew that he deserved to be executed just like the people John Bradford witnessed being led to the execution.

Who are we to throw stones?

Who are we to boast in our wisdom?

Who are we to bully the blind? No, we are to help lead the blind to Jesus so that He can give them His Spirit so that they can understand their own version of “There, but for the grace of God Go I.”

What is your version?

Would you have killed someone by driving drunk…but for the grace of God?

Would you have been ruined by guilt for getting an abortion…but for the grace of God?

Would you have never been remarried after a horrible divorce…but for the grace of God?

Would you have never felt worthy of being loved after having an affair…but for the grace of God?

Would you have never been reconciled to a brother or sister…but for the grace of God?

Would you have been a radical right wing conservative…but for the grace of God?

Would you be living in a commune practicing free love…but for the grace of God?

Would you be doing drugs or drowning yourself in alcohol…but for the grace of God?

Would your kids hate you for your ultra-legalistic religious views…but for the grace of God?

We know what we know because of the Spirit of God who has been given to us by the grace of God. That was made possible for us through the death and resurrection of the Son of God.

It doesn’t mean that hard work and discipline isn’t involved. Remember Paul said he worked harder than everybody. But he didn’t attribute who he was to his hard work. He attributed it to the grace of God.

All the worldly wisdom and natural intelligence in the world cannot get you one step closer to God. And likewise, none of your spiritual wisdom comes from anything but the grace of God.

And here is something really cool about all this as it pertains to us. We are to be hard evidence of the grace of God in other people’s lives.

By God’s grace I was born into the family I was born into.

By God’s grace I met my wife.

By God’s grace I came to this church.

By God’s grace I didn’t stay on the path I was on…

Christian, the last thing I want to leave you with today is this…Do not speak your words of wisdom to someone until you have admitted that you could be or would be, or have been in their shoes…

You and I are fools who would be walking our own way…Except for the wisdom of God, that comes from the Spirit of God, only by the grace of God.