

St. Paul's Dorking Small Groups. June 5th 2005

God's Gifts - the Gifts in Practice The gifts of Wisdom and Knowledge

1 Corinthians 2: 1-16



Word: Key points from Sunday's sermon

People have always sought wisdom, but what is wisdom? Proverbs says, "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" Prov 9:10, "the Lord gives wisdom and from His mouth comes knowledge and understanding". Prov 2:6. OT wisdom is both *from* God, and at the same time *undergirds our understanding* of God.

Where does Wisdom come from today for us as Christians? Jesus' wisdom and knowledge clearly came from God the Holy Spirit. And in John 16:13, Jesus said: "The spirit of truth will guide you into all truth...He will take from what is mine and make it known to you." Paul takes this up in 1 Corinthians 2:10 and 12, our KEY VERSES.

Why do we need Wisdom? The gift of wisdom is a key way in which God reveals His purposes to us. Wisdom is the positive use of experience and a message of wisdom is the ability to apply spiritual insight to specific issues, often in the midst of conflict or confusion. If we look at the apostle Peter, who was given a message of wisdom at Pentecost as he preached the first Christian sermon, we can see that he was prepared for the gift by his time as a follower of Jesus and his knowledge of scripture. So Spiritual Disciplines can help us to nurture the gift, i.e. Scripture, meditation, prayer. Memorizing verses can help us use them when we need to. For help in meditation, look at the books of Eddie Askew or try some Celtic prayers; learn from other wise Christians; come to the Sanctuary services.

What's the gift of Wisdom for? It's to help us to explain the Gospel, to guide and advise other Christians, and to share with those outside the church. We need to realise that true wisdom comes from God and may conflict with worldly wisdom. See: Colossians 2:8.

What's a *message* or *word* of knowledge? It's a word or picture revealed directly from God, something we wouldn't naturally know that God gives at a particular time for a particular purpose, often when praying for others. It may feel risky to speak it out, and we need to be sensitive how we express it. But it can be an enormously powerful assurance of God's love to the recipient who recognises that God has spoken directly to them. Sometimes it may convict them of a need for repentance or commitment.

In conclusion, it's through the Spirit's wisdom that we understand the gospel, build up the church, influence those around us and learn how to use gifts of Knowledge.



Witness: Questions to discuss

1. What's your experience of wisdom from people outside the church? In what ways might they be inspired by God? How do you assess whether someone is wise? (Look at Solomon in 2 Chronicles 1 or go back to Proverbs. Or see James 3:13-18.)
2. How might we share the wisdom of Christ with others? In what ways might this wisdom conflict with the world's idea of what is wise?
3. What have been your experiences, if any, of messages or words of wisdom or knowledge? What were they about, and what was their effect?
4. How can we encourage the development of Christian wisdom in us? What ways have you found it helpful to study, learn or meditate on the bible? Are you able to be quiet with God? Does He speak to you through other people? Use Colossians 1:9-10 to pray for each other.