

## That No Flesh Should Glory

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Every day the Church of the Great God receives several letters, via the Internet, from people who have examined the material which God has given this little group the privilege to provide. Through this line of communication (that does not include all the personal emails, phone calls, letters, and contacts directly to the office, and the ministry), we typically receive over 300 letters a month from both the casual and careful readers of the *Forerunner*, Daily Berean, the *CGG Weekly*, and material out of various websites. Most are from subscribers to the Berean, and several of them are simple notes of thanks or encouragement. Many are from people who are serious in seeking clarification and or guidance so, they can better understand God's Word, and be able to apply it properly in their own life, in order to grow in grace and knowledge.

Some are from people who want to argue for argument's sake, or to push their own point of view regardless of what the truth of God's Word has to say. Of course, in spite of that fact, we try to respond to them all and always strive to answer according to what we believe and teach. As to the whys in the truth of God's Word, we do not have all the answers.

This is a fact of human life that all of us understand. That the farther down the road we go, as God works to bring us to His holiness, it becomes more clearly obvious to us that we do indeed look through a glass darkly; and with a relationship with God we see the absolute truth of the old saying, the more we know, the more we know we do not know.

The closer God draws us closer to Him, the more He gives us the privilege to see the reality of what we heard before, that He means exactly what He says, and His mind and His ways in which He works, are far beyond our limited ability to understand without His revelation when and where He chooses.

As we grow in understanding we come to see more certainly how applicable the apostle Paul's statement in I Corinthians 1:25-29 is to all men, and how critical it is for us to understand within our set apart relationship with the Father and the Son at this time. The wisest of wise, the strongest of strong, cannot even begin to approach God's wisdom and strength, in purpose and planning and in detailed execution of His plan. This is a great gift given to the called-out ones, who we can recognize the absolute truth of our own strength or weakness, relative to God and even for other men currently.

To begin this sermon, we will turn to I Corinthians 1, verses 25-29. We will read a section on what God has to say there about both the called at this time, and those who are yet to be called.

I will be reading this from the Good News Translation. This version drives home my point for this sermon, that no flesh should glory, and in His wisdom Jesus Christ has clearly given us a path to follow. This translation also does a good job as we move into chapter 2, to give us sense of how difficult a task this is as we fight to trust God completely even in using the gifts He has given us for the task at hand. You will see this in what Paul writes about wanting to properly use his own spectacular gifts in total submission to God.

**I Corinthians 1:25-29** (Good News Translation) For what seems to be God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and what seems to be God's weakness is stronger than human strength. Now remember what you were, my friends, when God called you. From the human point of view [or world view] few of you were wise or powerful or with high social standing. God purposely chose what the world considers nonsense in order to shame the wise, and he chose what the world considers weak in order to shame the powerful. He chose what the world looks down on and despises and thinks is nothing, in order to destroy what the world thinks is important. This means that no one [them or us] can boast in God's presence.

It certainly becomes obvious to us as we get deeper into God's work of creating man in His image, God knows what He is doing. The greatest of

human minds and strength could never do the work that God is doing, let alone plan it in the first place. The apostle Paul makes this very point regarding himself and his own brilliant mind, a gift from God. With a mind so sharp that he knew he could rely on it to easily hold his own in a debate with the wise men of Corinth. But rather, you will see he submitted himself completely to the direction of God's Holy Spirit so that God would show the wise men of Corinth the wisdom of what they would consider mere foolishness.

**I Corinthians 1:30-31** (GNT) But God has brought you into union with Christ Jesus, and God has made Christ to be our wisdom. By him we are put right with God; we become God's holy people and are set free. So then, as the scripture says, "Whoever wants to boast must boast of what the Lord has done."

Paul goes on to explain his own deference to God's revealed wisdom over his own abilities that were tantamount to the finest Greek thinkers there in Corinth. Because no matter what those without God's Holy Spirit thought of Paul's words, what he had to say would be faith building words directly from God's wisdom to those who God was leading the spiritual majority with His Spirit.

**I Corinthians 2:1-5** (GNT) [Paul says] When I came to you, my friends, to preach God's secret truth, I did not use big words in great learning. For while I was with you, I made up my mind to forget everything except Jesus Christ and especially his death on the cross. So when I came to you, I was weak and trembled all over with fear, and my teaching and message were not delivered with skillful words of human wisdom, but with convincing proof of the power of God's Spirit. Your faith, then, does not rest on human wisdom but on God's power.

This was part of the struggle that went on with Paul, as well as with all of us, to trust God's so implicitly that we will step out in faith, even when we fear making fools of ourselves before men, when we think that we have the capacity to handle it better ourselves. Do we seriously believe God will lead us according to His wisdom? Or do we have to depend on our own?

Therefore, I began this sermon with a short explanation of one of the ways the Church of the Great God bears witness to God before the world. We see letters from all over the world, from all kinds of people, including some brilliant people, and most will not bow themselves to the wisdom of God because they cannot. This can become a subtle trap for us who have been gifted to understand, because Satan may lead us to think we are better than others because of the gifts of spiritual discernment and the tremendous gifts God has given us.

We hear from people who consider Jesus Christ a created being, and they will not change their position regardless of God's Word. People who have all kinds of pet theories about prophecy, regardless of the truth of God's Word. And on and on it goes. However, among them, the few hidden among the world, are others who have been called at this time, and how we handle our opportunities to preach according to the wisdom of God makes a big difference, as it does with each and every one of you and your contact with others within the church and without.

Are we submitting ourselves to the wisdom of God? Or are we allowing Satan to subtly trip us up, even with the gifts that God has given us to glorify Him? Satan desperately wants us to fail by turning our gifts away from humble use under the wisdom of God, to a self-serving source of pride.

Brethren, this is a pride much worse than the pride of those who want to argue the truth of God's Word to their own end. Because for us, eternal judgment must now begin at the household of God, not men. God has given all of us priceless gifts of understanding that most of the world does not share at this time. But the witness that we make today must be in spiritual maturity.

**I Corinthians 2:6-9** (GNT) [Paul continues] Yet I do proclaim a message of wisdom to those who are spiritually mature. But it is not the wisdom that belongs to this world or to the powers that rule this world—powers that are losing their power. The wisdom that I proclaim is God's secret wisdom, which is hidden from human beings, but which he had already chosen for our glory even before the world was made. None of the rulers of this world knew this wisdom. If they had known it, they would not have crucified the

Lord of glory. However, as the scripture says, "What no one ever saw or heard, which no one ever thought would happen, is the very thing God prepared for those who love him."

**I Corinthians 2:12-16** (GNT) We have not received the world's spirit; instead, we have received the Spirit sent by God, so that we may know all that God has given us. So then, we do not speak with words taught by human wisdom, but in words taught by the Spirit as we explain spiritual truths to those who have the Spirit. Whoever who does not have the Spirit cannot receive the gifts that come from God's Spirit. Such a person really does not understand them, and they see them as nonsense, because their value can be judged only on a spiritual basis. Whoever has the Spirit, however, is able to judge the value of everything, but no one is able to judge him. As the scripture says, "Who knows the mind of the Lord? who can get give Him advise?"

**I Corinthians 2:16** For who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ.

Brethren, we know from Philippians 2, this mind of Christ our Creator, was a mind set on willingly giving everything He had, as the One who walked with the Father from eternity, all His rights and privileges as God. He gave them all up to become part of His creation, to die for His creation, to please the Father, and to bring all mankind into Their image. The wisdom of this world considers this impossible foolishness and can only see from below the sun. Yet we have the wisdom available to us even though as human beings still influenced by our carnal nature. It is a constant battle to trust God completely because of that carnal nature, and we constantly try to put ourselves out in front of God. We must stop doing that.

A minute ago I mentioned that judgment must now begin at the household of God. As we all know, that was written by Peter quite a while after he experienced the very thing under examination in the sermon, of letting his own gift of passion, overwhelm his view of the wisdom of God.

At this point I would like you to turn to Matthew, as we go through parts of Matthew 15 and 16, I would like you to look at it from a slightly different

angle. Please consider that even though each situation we are going to look at with Peter are addressed to a very particular man, Simon Bar-jonah, the most impetuous disciple called by the Father to the Son. We need to see this from the standpoint that this is the way the Father and the Son develop every one of us.

Matthew 16 begins with the Pharisees and Sadducees demanding Jesus Christ to give them a sign. Beyond everything He had already done to prove that He was the Christ, this, of course, was on the heel of the incredible miracle of the feeding the four thousand. The chapter then moves to Christ's warning to the disciples, as we have heard already, not to let themselves get infected with the leaven of the doctrine of the Pharisees, driven to do everything they could to maintain their positions in spite of the truth and wisdom of God standing in their midst.

It is at this point that Jesus asked His disciples a question that He knew they already had the answer to it was revealed to all of them.

**Matthew 16:13-20** When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea a Philippi, He asked His disciples saying, "Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?" So they said, "Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will bound on haven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." Then He commanded His disciples that they should tell no one that He was Jesus Christ.

Please note that none of the disciples claimed that Jesus Christ was John the Baptist, that He was Elijah, that He was Jeremiah, or one of the prophets. They all merely avoided to answer directly, maybe because they were

intimidated by the leaven of the Pharisees and embarrassed to say what was not according to the world around them. But Peter, the man gifted with fearless bold passion, proclaimed the wisdom of God. This bold passion was indeed a great gift that would certainly serve God and the body of Christ well. But only when developed to always humbly submit to the wisdom of God.

When this gift was used under the wisdom of God, Simon Bar-jonah was declared by Jesus Christ to be Peter, a small stone and part of the Rock, that is, Jesus Christ, against which the satanic evil will not prevail, as all of we are to be proclaimed the small stones and part of the Rock. And then the wisdom of God, that is trusting the Word of God, Jesus Christ committed the keys of the kingdom and the proper decision making in line with the mind of God to Peter and all the other stones who were chips off the old block. We all know what happened next, in the early stages of development of Christ's mind.

**Matthew 16:21-23** From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day. Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, "Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!" But He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men."

Peter, a type of all those gifted for the glory of God, showed how easily Satan can, without due diligence, lead us to use our God-given gifts to serve our own pride. That is what happened when Peter, as a type of us all, determined not to follow the wisdom God, and to turn to what his own carnal mind led him to believe.

The point is that Satan is always scheming to turn us. But brethren, here is the hope and strength that we find in the Father and the Son. God will expose Satan's perverted deceit, and even though it may be painful for us to see how easily we are led to serve our own pride, God is taking us through a process of growth, as the Father and Son reveal the wisdom from above, to put us back on track.

**Matthew 16:24-28** Then Jesus said to His disciples, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works. Assuredly, I say to you, there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom.”

**Matthew 17:1-9** Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, led them up on a high mountain by themselves; and He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light. And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him.

Then Peter answered and said to Jesus, “Lord it is good for us to be here; if You wish, let us make here three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.” While he was still speaking, behold a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!” And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their faces and were greatly afraid. But Jesus came and touched them and said, “Arise, and do not be afraid.”

We will always have what we need if we are willing to submit to the truth of God’s Word. What we think we know on how to handle a situation with the gifts that God has given us, must always line up with the wisdom of God and not the world. Peter was so overwhelmed in his passionate boldness; he spoke out to build tabernacles for Elijah and Moses. He knew who they were, but he was overwhelmed. The reality of any situation and the quick use of the God-given gifts in line with true reality of all called into the body of Christ, can only be understood through the revealed wisdom of God for His glory and not for our own.



If we had time to go step-by-step through the rest of the chapter, we would see a type of the way that God is working with all of us. What we think is reality, can truly be seen through the revealed wisdom of God only. Any work that we do can only be done, especially driving Satan away, through developing the same mind and intimate relationship with the Rock of our salvation in submission to the guiding wisdom of God.

The last few verses of Matthew 17 hold an awesome promise for us if we do like Peter and begin to completely think and act according to the wisdom of God.

**Matthew 17:24-27** When they had come to Capernaum, those who received the temple tax came to Peter and said, “Does your Teacher does not pay the temple tax?” He said, “Yes.” And when he had come into the house, Jesus anticipated him, saying, [Peter presumed to boldly speak out, he chose correctly but not for the right reasons], “What do you think, Simon? From whom do the kings of the earth take customs or taxes, from their sons or from strangers?” Peter said to Him, “From strangers.” Jesus said to him, “Then the sons are free. Nevertheless, lest we offend them, go to the sea, cast in a hook, and take the fish that comes up first. And when you have opened its mouth, you will find a piece of money; take that and give it to them for Me and you.”

Peter made a decision and then Jesus backed it up and gave him insight into why it was the right decision, and let Peter know they were in it together. “You will find a piece of money, take that and give it to them for you and Me”—together.

Brethren, we all know this was not the last time that Peter let his gift of boldness and courage get the best of him. We all know his declaration not to abandon Christ, his sword-wielding effort to protect Christ from the mob that had come to take Christ to His death. Considering Jesus Christ’s own prayer in John 17, where Jesus Christ said,

**John 17:17-22** “Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who believe in Me

through their word; that they may be one as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they may also be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as we are one."

**I Peter 5:5-11** Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world. But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you. To Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

All glory belongs only to our great God that no flesh should glory, no matter how many gifts we have been given to be used according to wisdom of God.