**BCM Bible Study: Sept. 11/12, 2019**

**1 Corinthians 2:1-3:17**

Looking Back (10 minutes)

* Follow up on the challenge you issued last week. These were the options:
  + Do something ***anonymously*** for someone else. Send them a gift, write them an encouraging note, take them breakfast, etc.
  + In an effort to take yourself out of the spotlight, don’t post on social media for a week. Don’t make a post saying you aren’t going to post – that just draws attention!
* Was it difficult to do what you did? If so, why do you think it was difficult?
* What did you learn about yourself? Did you realize a need for humility?

Wisdom that is Given

* Last week we saw that the way of the cross is contrary to the wisdom of the world, which says that success is gained through being great and being made much of. Instead, the way to abundant life is humility. We concluded with Paul’s example – he embodied the gospel in the humble, meek way that he shared the gospel. **Read 1 Cor. 2:1-10**
  + In v.7 how does Paul describe the wisdom of God? (Hidden)
  + In verses 9-10, how does Paul contrast human wisdom and spiritual wisdom?
    - True wisdom is not something the “mature” have figured out based on their own ability. Instead, since the gospel is so contrary to human wisdom, it is evident that it has been ***revealed*** to those who know it. Because of this, even the wise cannot claim that they are in some way superior.
  + In what was is this contrary to the way people generally talk about wisdom and knowledge?
* **Read 1 Cor. 2:11-16**
  + What is the message of vv.11-12? (Answer: Once again, the Spirit ***reveals*** true wisdom to us; it is not something we have discerned by our own ability.)
  + In vv.13-15, what is the difference between the “natural person” and the “spiritual person.” (Answer: One has the Spirit and one doesn’t. This means that the person with the Spirit is able to begin to view all of life through the lens of the gospel.)
  + Verse 16 is a quotation from Isaiah 40:13. **Read Isaiah 40:12-18, 21-31**.
    - Given this, what is the expected answer to Paul’s question in 2:15? (No one!)
    - Why is the answer in v.16 surprising?
    - What does it mean to have the mind of Christ?
      * To have the mind of Christ means that through the Spirit, we have the means to view every facet of life the way that Jesus did. There are not certain things that are spiritual and other things that are not – the gospel impacts not only all that we do, but how we do it.
    - In what ways have you seen spiritual wisdom and natural wisdom contradict one another? In what ways does spiritual wisdom look foolish to those who do not have the Spirit?
    - What parts of your life do you tend to view as “secular” (or not spiritual)? (i.e. finances, job, major, relationships, diet/exercise, sleep habits) What would be different if you started to view that area of your life through a spiritual lens? (We will return to this for the conclusion)

Life in the Spirit: **Read 1 Cor. 3:1-4**

* Paul has now laid out the principle of spiritual wisdom vs. “natural” wisdom and will apply it to the Corinthian church. What is Paul’s message to the Corinthians in these 4 verses?
  + While it is true that all Christians have received the Holy Spirit when they first believed in Christ, this does not mean that all Christians fully live according to the Spirit. This statement is instructive – “The church is a school for sinners, not a museum for saints.” (Anthony Thiselton)
* Given this, Paul will now demonstrate how they should view and interact with one another and why it is important to do so. **Read 1 Cor. 3:5-17.** What is the message of vv.5-9?
  + In what way does this impact your relationship with other Christians? With God? With the idea of and pressure for success in doing God’s work?
  + In what way does this imagery highlight the importance of the whole community working together?
* What is the message of vv.10-15?
  + Answer: Just as the essential thing for the harvest was God giving the growth, so also the essential thing about the building is that Jesus is its foundation. Also, just as watering and tilling the soil is the job of the church as given by God to bring about growth, so too is building upon the foundation of Christ. Only in God’s judgment will we perfectly know whether or not the work done was given by God or created by human wisdom. What is done by the Spirit will stand firm. What is not will be destroyed. These are not verses about personal salvation; Paul is talking about Christian service that is seriously flawed by self-interest.
    - Though we cannot ultimately tell whether or not someone else’s or even our own actions are of the Spirit, how can the example of Christ serve as a metric for self-examination?
* Look again at vv.16-17. It is important to note that every “you” in these verses is plural – how does this change your understanding of what is being said? What does this have to do with the rest of Paul’s discussion?
  + **Read Ex. 25:1-2, 7-8; Eph. 2:19-22**. What is the biblical significance of the temple?
  + Therefore, why is it crucial that we live according to the Spirit, in submission to God and in cooperation with (not competition with) one another?
* How did Paul apply the “mind of Christ” to the situation of disunity?

Conclusion and Challenge

* The goal here is to begin training ourselves to listen to the Spirit and begin to walk with Him. As we do that, we can begin to put on the mind of Christ and treat every situation in a way that honors Him.
  + **Challenge**: Explain the worksheet and ask everyone to complete it by next week to be discussed together. Encourage honest, assuring them that no one will be perfect – this is intended for growth, not perfection. Send it out once family group time is over.