



May 17, 2026  
**The Spirit Illuminates**  
I Corinthians 2:6-16



1. **Sermon Outline:**

- a. The Holy Spirit Inspired Scripture to Reveal God's Eternal Truth and Wisdom
  - i. God's truth and wisdom is very different from our fallen world's "wisdom"
  - ii. The Bible reveals this eternal wisdom
- b. The Holy Spirit's Illumination Is the Only Way to Truly Understand Scripture
  - i. The Spirit helps believers understand the Scriptures
  - ii. Even the smartest unbelieving expert cannot fully understand Scripture
- c. Use the Mind of Christ the Spirit Gives You
  - i. The Holy Spirit gives you the mind of Christ
  - ii. Use His mind to read and study the Bible for yourself
  - iii. Meditate on what you read using Christ's mind

2. **Sunday** – As soon as possible after the sermon, consider:

- a. What stood out to you the most in this sermon?
- b. What new truth did you learn, or what truth were you reminded of?
- c. Is there a particular Scripture passage you feel God is leading you to meditate on or commit to memory?
- d. What is one thing God is leading you to do after hearing this message?
- e. Did God convict you of a need to make any changes in your life and walk with Him?

3. **Monday:**

- a. Read this week's focal passage, 1 Corinthians 2:6-16, several times (it may be helpful to start with verse 1 the first time in order to get the context for the passage since it starts with "Yet" ("however" in the NIV and CSB)).
  - i. How would you describe the main point Paul is making to the Corinthians in a single sentence (i.e., what is the subject of the entire passage)?
  - ii. What comparisons does Paul make in the passage?
  - iii. Read Acts 17:19-21 and 18:1-4 & 11. Since Corinth is less than 50 miles from Athens, how do you think their initial responses to Paul's message might have compared? How do you think the views and opinions of the society in which the Corinthian Christians lived may have influenced the views Paul is writing about?
  - iv. In your initial reading of this passage, is there anything that strikes you as being particularly relevant to the age in which we live?

- b. Read 1 Corinthians 1:18-25. How do you see these verses setting the stage for what Paul tells us in the focal passage?

#### 4. *Tuesday:*

- a. Read and meditate on 1 Corinthians 2:6-9.
- b. Who do you think Paul has in mind when he uses the word “mature”?
  - i. How does his contrasting the wisdom imparted to the mature with that of the rulers of this age indicate who he considers mature?
  - ii. What clarity does 1 Corinthians 1:18-21 provide to the use of mature in this verse?
- c. What six truths can you identify about the wisdom Paul is writing about from verses 7-9?
  - i. Where does the wisdom come from? Where does it not come from?
  - ii. Why would Paul say the wisdom is secret and hidden (consider Romans 16:25-26, Ephesians 3:5-10, & Colossians 1:25-27)?
  - iii. When did God ordain this “wisdom” (see also 2 Timothy 1:9)? What somewhat surprising, but unimaginably precious, event was included in the plan God ordained (see Acts 2:22-23 & 1 Peter 1:18-20)?
  - iv. What was God’s objective in establishing this wisdom? Who does Paul say receives the glory in Ephesians 1:6, 12, & 14? How is it that he can say in verse 7 that we receive glory (compare John 17:22-24 and Romans 8:28-30)?
  - v. From whom does verse 8 say the wisdom remains hidden?
    - 1. When reading Luke 23:34, Acts 3:17, and 4:25-28, who would we conclude was meant by rulers?
    - 2. If we read passages like Romans 8:38, Colossians 2:15, and Ephesians 6:12 (also Jesus’ words in John 12:31, 14:30, and 16:11), who would we say is meant?
  - vi. When does this wisdom apply to our lives (consider Romans 8:28)?

#### 5. *Wednesday:*

- a. Read and meditate on 1 Corinthians 2:9-11.
- b. In verse 9, Paul presents a paraphrase from the Old Testament. Read Isaiah 52:15, 64:4, 65:17, and Jeremiah 3:16. How does he incorporate elements of each verse into his paraphrase?
- c. Having made the case that the world cannot perceive the wisdom of God, what does Paul tell us God has done? To whom has He done it? And how has He done it?
- d. Verse 10a presents a truth but also raises a question: What are “these things” God has revealed?
  - i. What answer might we glean from verse 9a (before the quotation)?
  - ii. How do we know, the little that we do know, about “what God has prepared for those who love him” (see Ephesians 3:3-5)?

- iii. What truth about the Holy Spirit is implied in verses 10b-11? (Note: This is one of the primary passages confirming that the Holy Spirit is divine and a person, thereby supporting the doctrine of the Trinity. As you read 10b-11, what shows that the Spirit is a person and not, as many Christians believe, just a force or power?)

#### 6. *Thursday:*

- a. Read and meditate on 1 Corinthians 2:10b-13.
- b. Paul introduces the contrast between those who possess the Spirit (Christians) and those who do not (the world) with a syllogism (a logical argument in which two premises are combined to reach a conclusion).
  - i. What is the major premise Paul presents in verse 11?
  - ii. What is the second premise in verse 12a?
  - iii. What is the logical conclusion presented in verse 12b?
    1. How does Paul personalize the conclusion for Christians?
    2. What does it mean to you that, to some degree, the Spirit gives us insight into the very thoughts of God?
    3. How does verse 12b support what Jesus taught in John 14:26?
- c. How does Paul describe the mechanism used to relay the wisdom “freely given” by God to others in verse 13?
  - i. How do you see this relating to what Paul tells Timothy in 2 Timothy 3:15-17 and 2 Peter 1:20-21?
  - ii. What do Matthew 10:19-20 and Luke 12:11-12 teach us about “Spirit-taught words”? Why would these “Spirit-taught words” never differ in substance or contradict what is given to us in the Bible?

#### 7. *Friday:*

- a. Read and meditate on 1 Corinthians 2:12-16.
- b. While describing the differences between spiritual and unspiritual people in these verses, what three important ministries does Paul highlight that are performed by the Holy Spirit?
  - i. When considered along with 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, 1 Corinthians 12:13, Ephesians 1:13-14, and John 14:16, what does verse 12 tell us is a critical ministry of the Spirit to all Christians?
  - ii. When considered with John 14:26 and 17:8, what would a second ministry of the Spirit be?
  - iii. Finally, what do verses 14-15 suggest as a ministry of the Holy Spirit (see John 6:44, Romans 5:5, Galatians 4:4-6)?
- c. What does it mean to you that something is “spiritually discerned” (or “discerned only through the Spirit”)?
  - i. How does discernment differ from just seeing or knowing?

- ii. Interestingly, almost half of the uses of the word “discern” (or discerning/discernment) are in Proverbs. Read these passages from Proverbs: 1:5, 8:9, 10:13, 14:6, 33, 15:14, 16:21, 17:10, 24, & 28, 18:15, 19:25, 28:2, 7, & 11. How do these verses affect your understanding of discerning?

8. **Saturday:**

- a. Read the focal passage one more time, slowly, letting each thought linger in your mind as you consider its meaning and implications to your life.
  - b. Summarize in your own words the main difference between the wisdom of the world and wisdom from the Spirit.
  - c. Paul concludes this chapter in verse 16 with a quotation from the Old Testament prophet Isaiah. Rephrase this statement in your own words; what does it mean to you, and how does it support Paul’s argument that God’s wisdom comes only through the Spirit?
  - d. What one truth from 1 Corinthians 2:6-16 seems most relevant to you personally? Have you observed it at work in your life? How or why not??
9. **Application:** God, in His wisdom, formulated the plan to save mankind from its sin an eternity before the first sin was committed. At exactly the right time, He provided us the salvation in that plan through His Son, and then, through His Spirit, He gives us insight into His very heart – a heart that loves the world and desires that all be saved. But Paul confirms what we know – the world considers all this foolishness. Only the Spirit can change that view in a person’s heart. As Christians, we must be careful not to try to do the Spirit's job by resorting to “clever gimmicks” or “marketing strategies” to make the Gospel more appealing. We cannot improve on what God provides in His Word, nor can we justify skipping any of it because we think our society will find it offensive.
- a. **Pray:** This week, we pray for two unreached people groups in China:
  - b. **Mishaba Laluo:** The Mishaba Laluo are a people group of 700,000 in Yunnan, China. They worship tree spirits, rice spirits, and their ancestors — calling out to mountains for a harvest blessing and sacrificing pigs to ancient trees they believe will protect their village. Their traditional beliefs trap them in constant fear of angry spirits and keep them culturally isolated. For a Mishaba Laluo person, becoming Christian feels like betraying their people. While a Bible translation in their heart language is underway, most have only access to the Mandarin Chinese Bible, which they struggle to understand. Lord of heaven and earth, plant your saving gospel among the hills and in the hearts of the Laluo people.
  - c. **Meifu Li:** The Meifu Li live on the island of Hainan in the Gulf of Tonkin, southwest of Hanoi. In the past, the Meifu Li lived in simple straw huts designed to withstand the many typhoons that strike the island every year. They dug a pit in the ground, placed bamboo or wood poles over it to form an oblong frame, and covered it with straw. The result was a low-lying structure that resembled an overturned boat. As part of a Li wedding ceremony, the bride's family must kiss a pig and two fowls. The bride's eldest brother remains her legal guardian after the marriage. The Meifu Li traditionally believed in the existence of ghosts and devils, but now only the elderly practice spirit appeasement. The younger generation, having been educated in atheistic schools, rejects all such practices as foolish superstition. There are no known churches or Christians among the Meifu Li.