*DAILY DEVOTIONAL*

September 24 - 29

*The Holy Spirit*

**Monday, September 24 1 Corinthians 2:1-5**

“I relied on the Spirit’s power”

In this passage Paul reminds the Corinthian Christians of the content and style of his ministry when he was with them. Paul does not deny that he tried to present his message in as compelling a form as possible, merely that by the world’s standards he was at best ordinary. He shares his sense of personal inadequacy which reminds us of the Lord’s reassurance to him not to be afraid (Acts 18:9-10). His “weakness” here may also allude to the thorn in his flesh (2 Corinthians 12:7) – some persistent physical ailment.

The “wise and persuasive words” of verse 4 must again refer to worldly wisdom and persuasion, since they are contrasted with “the Spirit’s power.” Though his speech and proclamation persuaded them so that they had faith, their faith was not a knowledge gained through rhetoric which swayed them on the basis of the opinions of human beings. Rather, their faith was grounded on something far more sure than clever arguments. Their faith was based on the most absolute form of proof – the sure proof of God’s Spirit and power at work in their lives.

*Your power at work in me, Holy Spirit, assures me that I am a child of God. Amen.*

**Tuesday, September 25 1 Corinthians 2:6-9**

“We speak the wisdom of God”

Paul made a strong case in verses 1-5 that the gospel owes nothing to human wisdom, and that both the messenger and the message are despised by the rulers of this age. But now he seems to be aware that people might take what he has written to mean that any kind of wisdom is bad. So in these verses he emphasizes the kind of wisdom that is good – divine wisdom. He teaches that there is such a thing as Christian wisdom which is clearly different from the world’s wisdom. It centers in God’s plan of salvation as revealed in Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit. This wisdom is neither understood nor appreciated by the unbelieving person.

The “wisdom of God” is a reference to the gospel in all its implications. It is not just a sermon about the cross but involves all that is included in understanding the nature of God and human destiny. By “hidden wisdom” Paul means that which was hidden in the past but which has now been made known by the revelation of God in Jesus Christ, a revelation which people cannot understand unless the Spirit assists them.

*Holy Spirit, continue to teach me the wisdom of God. Amen.*

**Wednesday, September 26 1 Corinthians 2:10-12**

“We have received God’s Spirit, not the world’s spirit”

The phrase “the world’s spirit” refers to the spirit of this age. In all of Paul’s writings he contends that history is divided into “this present age” and “the age to come.” By “this age” he means this world which is marked by rebellion against the creator – the human-centered world. By the “age to come” he means that Kingdom which God has already begun to create through Christ. While Paul was quite realistic about the powers of this world, his writing is infected with a great confidence concerning God’s ultimate victory in all things.

Those who have not received the Spirit of God in their lives will have their understanding and their horizons very much limited to this world. Without the Spirit of God helping them they cannot understand the things of God. Only a person’s own spirit or mind knows that individual’s thoughts unless he or she chooses to disclose them to someone else, an affirmation which is true for God as well as humanity. Because Christians have God’s Spirit living in them, they can know God’s thoughts, at least to the extent that his Spirit graciously reveals them.

*Because you live in me, Holy Spirit, I am able to know the mind of God. Amen.*

*DAILY DEVOTIONAL*

September 24 – 29

*The Holy Spirit*

**Thursday, September 27 1 Corinthians 2:13-16**

“The Spirit’s truth”

“Human wisdom” is that which is *merely* human, seeking to make sense of the world by human means alone. “Spiritual wisdom” does not exclude human wisdom, but corrects its misinterpretations by applying the Spirit’s truth concerning the world in which we live and the God who created it. The person who does not have the Spirit is limited to human wisdom, while the person who does have the Spirit (that is, the Christian) has access to spiritual wisdom in addition to his or her human wisdom.

The person without the Spirit lives as if there was nothing beyond the physical life and there were no needs other than material needs. For instance, such a person thinks that nothing is more important than the satisfaction of the sex urge and thus cannot understand the meaning of chastity. One who ranks the amassing of material things as the supreme end of life cannot understand generosity. The person who has no thought beyond this world cannot understand the things of God. Where the Spirit is absent, sexual immorality, materialism, and atheism prevail.

*Teach me you truth, Holy Spirit, that I may learn the things of God. Amen.*

**Friday, September 28 1 Corinthians 3:1-9**

“Infants in Christ”

While the Christians in Corinth had received the Holy Spirit, their lives were still being controlled by their old nature. As “infants in Christ” they had truly experienced new birth, but instead of having begun to grow up and mature they had remained in a state of spiritual infancy. In this condition they were neither able to cope with the spiritually “adult” problems that confronted them nor receive mature teaching from Paul about God.

When we don’t grow spiritually, several things happen, all of which are bad. First, we lose sight of the real goal that Christ has for us which is to become persons controlled by the Spirit rather continuing to be controlled by sin. Consequently, we look a lot like people who are not Christians and any witness about Christ rings false. Thus, both the individual and the church suffer. Prolonged immaturity creates doubt about one’s ability to live a Christian life, even doubt of salvation itself. It leads to guilt over repeated failure to follow Christ faithfully, and a sense of unworthiness that causes a distancing from fellow believers.

*I surrender to you, Holy Spirit, that I may become a mature believer. Amen.*

**Saturday, September 29 1 Corinthians 3:10-23**

“You are the church and the Spirit lives among you”

Paul considered himself the wise master builder of the Corinthian church by virtue of his having begun the work there and having nurtured it during its first year and a half. He was there in advance of the first convert and had laid the very foundation of the church. But even as he began to write about the great care which needed to be exercised in building upon that foundation, he felt the need to remind the church what the foundation was – Jesus Christ and the gospel message of his death, burial, and resurrection.

The church is the most holy and valuable of buildings. Of course, Paul does not mean a literal building, but the Corinthian believers as a whole. All the “yous” of verses 16-17 are plural; corporately these Christians form one temple. Just as Jewish and pagan temples were believed to be the dwelling place of God (or the gods), so also Christian fellowship is the special place of the Spirit’s presence. That is why the threat in verse 17 is so harsh against anyone who would try to destroy the church.

*Build our church, Holy Spirit, on the foundation of Christ. Amen.*