

# 1 Corinthians 2 v 10-16

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[ 0 : 00 ] I wonder if you've been around any fruit and vegetable markets recently. Sometimes when you see the stalls with their apples laid out, you're staggered at the way that the traders get them in such neat piles.

And of course, apples come in all sorts of different colours. There's red ones, green ones, I was told about yellow ones or golden ones.

But let me just concentrate on two types of apples. And I'd like to ask you, can you tell the difference between a Braben apple and a Granny Smith apple?

Now I can see certain ladies' faces light up because you know, even if your husbands haven't got a clue. Well, one is red and one is green.

And if you can't tell the difference between a red apple and a green apple, you've got a problem known as colour blindness. And there's a very large number of men in particular who are colour blind.

[ 1 : 12 ] And if you've got this condition of colour blindness, you might not get a job in the electronics industry or the electrical industry because it's absolutely vital to be able to distinguish the various colours.

In fact, it's a matter of life and death as to whether or not you can distinguish the colours. Colour blindness is a really serious problem. And it's a really serious problem if you're careless at traffic lights and you can't see the red and the green.

You can't distinguish them. Of course, these days, you're in different positions that's going to help you. But did you know that in certain European countries, one at least, they won't give you a driving licence if you're colour blind, if you can't distinguish between the red and the green?

And of course, you can see the reason for it. It's absolutely vital to drive safely that you can distinguish those two colours. Well, I'm not going to talk about that.

There's a more serious condition, and that's spiritual blindness, not to do with reds and greens, but to do with black and white, right and wrong, if you like, good and bad, truth and error, the mind of God and the wisdom of the world.

[ 2 : 38 ] I read from Isaiah earlier, and if you go to Isaiah 5 and verse 20, we read this, Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter.

Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes and clever in their own sight. So can you distinguish between right and wrong?

Can you distinguish between truth and error? If you like, spiritual sweet from spiritual sour. If you can't, Isaiah says it's serious.

He pronounces a woe against those who have that particular kind of spiritual blindness. So it's serious, but how do you know?

How do you know what is right and wrong? What is truth and what is error? How do you set the standard as regards what is spiritually light and spiritual darkness?

[ 3 : 52 ] If you try to get a job in, say, an electronics industry, you'll go to have a test.

Your eyesight will be tested to see whether you're colour blind. And if you fail, it's no good turning round to the interviewer and say, Well, you're wrong.

Your whole standards are wrong. I'm right. It just doesn't work. It doesn't wash. They're the ones who set the standard. And you must bow to their decision.

Now, in spiritual terms, you don't determine, you don't decide what is actually truth and what is error. Only God can do that.

Only God is wise. After all, he made you. He made everything. It's his prerogative to say what is true and what is false, what is good and what is bad.

[ 4 : 54 ] And you must bow to what he has said. You must have his mind. You must have his will. So the question is, do you have the mind of God?

Or are you independent of him? In the passage I read earlier, Isaiah 40, he had to correct those who thought they knew better than God.

Now, in chapter 5, Isaiah pronounced a woe for those who thought they were wise in their own eyes. But it was developed further in chapter 40 against those who essentially accused the Lord of not knowing what he was doing.

The people he spoke to questioned the knowledge, the wisdom, the justice of God. Why do you say, O Jacob, and complain, O Israel, my way is hidden from the Lord and my cause is disregarded by my God?

That gives you a flavor of what was going on in their minds. They were accusing God of not being wise, not being just, not being caring, not considering their needs.

[ 6 : 08 ] So Isaiah was correcting those in Israel who were criticizing God. They accused him of injustice. They felt he was wrong in the way that he was treating them.

They failed to appreciate and acknowledge the wisdom and justice of God. That was them. But what about you? What about myself?

Do we today fall in the same trap? Do we question the way that God is dealing with us? Remember what Isaiah said.

Do you not know? Have you not heard? Has it not been told you from the beginning? Haven't you understood since the earth was founded, he sits enthroned above the circle of the earth, and the people are like grasshoppers.

He stretches out the heavens like a canopy and spreads them out like a tent to live in. He brings princes to naught and reduces the rulers of the world to nothing.

[ 7 : 11 ] See the discrepancy between the almighty God, who called all things into being and sustains all things, and even kings and rulers and wise men.

So what about you and I? God decides what is wise and foolish. And if you disagree with him, you're like a piece of clay telling a potter what he's doing.

Who has understood the mind of the Lord or instructed him as his counsellor? And yet there are those who think they know better than God.

They think they can live in God's world and tell him how to run it. And if you listen to worldly-minded people living according to the wisdom of this world, you might well conclude that they know better than God.

They constantly judge him. So let's come back to the question, do you have the mind of God? Do you have the mind of Christ?

[ 8 : 20 ] If you have, you must assess the wisdom of this world. You must, and I'm emphasising must, you must bring the mind of Christ to judge the world and its wisdom.

Now the believers at Corinth were struggling to apply the mind of Christ to the wisdom of this world. They failed to judge the wisdom of the world and it brought them into contention with the Lord, with Paul, and with each other.

They failed to rightly assess those who taught them spiritual truth and rightly assess them. And it caused divisions. I'm of Paul, I'm of Apollos, and so on.

And they were blinded by the wisdom of the world and they remained weak spiritual infants. And when we make a mess of our lives, it's because we don't think as God thinks.

Although we might not like to admit it, instead of judging the wisdom of the world, we'll end up making a judgment of the mind of God.

[ 9 : 38 ] And the result is spiritual confusion and disaster. Now the wisdom of the world had infiltrated the church in Corinth and there was confusion and division.

Now listen. If you've been born again, if the Spirit has come to you and made you a new creature in Christ, you have the mind of Christ.

His wisdom's in you and it's available to you. And therefore you should be able to distinguish between white and black, sweet and sour, good and bad.

You have the mind of Christ available to you in his word. So are you using it? Do you use it to judge your worldly attitudes?

Do you use it to judge the wisdom of the world around you? Look at verse 15. Come to verse 15 with me.

[10:54] The spiritual man makes a judgment about all things. Yet he himself is not subject, that means rightly judged, by any man's judgment.

but we have the mind of Christ. And that's why you can make an assessment or judgment of the wisdom of the world.

Notice at the end there, Paul refers to words I quoted from Isaiah that were 600 years earlier. And over those 600 years, very little had changed. Men still thought they knew better than God. The world despised God and the wisdom of God in Paul's time.

And it's still true today, isn't it? But who is the ultimate judge? Paul said that those who have the mind of Christ should judge the wisdom of the world.

[12:04] Or do you? Have you ever sat down and judged the attitudes of an unbelieving world? Have you noted how the wisdom of the world fails those who are guided by it?

Or are you intimidated by the world? Do you really think that the minds of men who are here today and gone tomorrow, like the flower of the field, have greater wisdom than the eternal and changing God who sustains all things?

Do you really think that the wisdom of the world should be used to assess the message of the church? And if you read your newspapers and watch the TV and the news, you know that there are those who do just that.

So the passage is telling you to think. At one time, school reports were much more incisive than they are today.

The sort of comment you might have had sort of 40, 50 years ago, maybe before as well, if you remember that far, would be like this. He has a brain, he should use it.

[13:32] Now, if you're to live the Christian life, you must assess the wisdom of the world. And you have the tools to make a judgment on the world's wisdom.

in John's first letter, chapter 2, verse 20, John says this, you have an anointing from the Holy One and all of you know the truth.

And as a spiritual person, you can and must judge the thinking of the world or you'll be swamped by the world and its opinions.

and what will remain will be a kind of Christianized worldly wisdom. Now, that is what was wrong with the church at Corinth.

So, how are you to know the mind of God? You've got to listen to his words. You must pay attention to what the Spirit has taught.

[14:45] Chapter 2, verse 13, of 1 Corinthians, Paul wrote this, this is what we speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words, not feelings, not hunches, but words, words taught by the Spirit informed apostle.

You must listen to the word of God to have the mind of God. That makes sense, doesn't it? Now, in theory, if you have a long pipe or tube filled with nothing but air, and you take a little, very small loudspeaker and bring it to the end of that pipe and play the right note, if that pipe is just the right length, it'll resonate.

It'll pick up the frequency, the sound frequency that goes to it, and it'll resonate. resonate. And your mind should resonate to the word of God if you're a spiritual person.

You'll resonate to what he says, and to what he says is correct and true. And in particular, you'll resonate to the message of the cross.

you'll resonate to what the apostles had to say about the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, and how you are to be saved.

[16:39] Listen how Paul puts it in chapter 1, verse 23, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews, and foolishness to the Gentiles, but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ, the power of God, and the wisdom of God.

If you're a spiritual person, you resonate to that gospel, and it brings life and joy to your soul. Now, are you ready to start making more judgments on the world?

Throughout most of Paul's letter to the Corinthians, Paul judges the wisdom of the world, and he does it in the realm of morality, business relationships, what you might consider your rights and privileges, the use of the gifts that you have, your behavior in the church of God's people, and the gathering of God's people, and family relationships, and doctrinal issues.

Isaiah, the prophet, says this, let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts. And as you read through Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, he's calling you to forsake your thoughts, which you've brought into the church, which you carry in your own mind, which affects your behavior, your behavior with others, and particularly within the church.

So you must search for the mind of Christ, revealed by Paul, and use it. And the Corinthians made little progress because they failed to judge the wisdom of the world, and to turn from it.

[ 18 : 52 ] If you like, they failed to repent. And if you're in Christ, if you believe in him, if you've been forgiven through faith in him, you've found the mercy of God through the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, you must abandon the wisdom of the world.

Listen how Paul put it in his letter to the Romans, chapter 12 and verse 1. I urge you brothers, in view of God's mercy, he's speaking to people who have found the mercy of God, I urge you, I beseech you, in view of God's mercy, offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God.

This is your spiritual act of worship. Now here's the crunch thing, do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

And then you'll be able to test and approve what God's will is, his good and pleasing and perfect will. Isn't it true that Christians are always talking about praying for God's will? Well here it is, it's there in the word of God.

Now are you listening to it? Have you accepted it? is Christ's mind dwelling in you? In the natural way of things, in the way of the world, you grow in wisdom and learn what to eat and not to eat by using your mind.

[ 20 : 28 ] You make judgments because of the mind that you've got. You quickly learn you don't run into the middle of a road. even a little child has to use his judgment from that point of view.

Little child learns that certain things are hot and he shouldn't touch them. He might go hot, hot and he quickly learns that's not the sort of thing to touch.

Little child learns that nettles sting and that certain creatures are dangerous. Well isn't that true spiritually? Are you using your spiritual judgment?

are you using the mind that God has given to you? And as you get older you develop your mind, you develop your powers of judgment and you become a responsible citizen hopefully and are able to make a sensible judgment when it comes to voting for politicians and so on and so forth.

And your education helps you in that. When you become a Christian, you enter Christ's school. You become part of his family and you learn his mind and you make judgments.

[ 21 : 48 ] Remember the words of our Lord in Matthew 11 verse 29, take my yoke upon you and learn from me for I'm gentle and humble in heart and you'll find rest for your souls.

So are you learning from him? Are you gaining his mind? Are you growing in grace and in the knowledge of God? If you are, you'll learn to judge the world and its attitudes just as Jesus judged the world.

And you'll learn to judge rightly and make the right response in different situations. But note something first of all.

Note the words of the Lord Jesus Christ that is gentle and humble in heart. This is lesson one.

And how many of us go wrong at this point? how many famous preachers in the past have gone wrong at that very critical point?

[ 23 : 04 ] And how much harm has been done by those who have not been gentle and humble in heart? One of the greatest of the 16th century reformers was a Frenchman called William Farrell.

He was probably the greatest preacher in French speaking Switzerland. But his fiery nature often got him into trouble.

And for a long time it limited his usefulness. It's very interesting that his father wanted him to be a dashing soldier. And it suited his fiery nature.

apart from the fact that God had dealings with Farrell and he wanted to develop his mind as well.

Not only did he develop his mind but God came to him and renewed his heart and became a Christian and gave him a heart for the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

But sadly he was often quite fiery in the way he expressed himself. His friend who was a minister at Val a man called Michael Lumpadius drew him aside one day and said go and feed the flock of God and guard your own nature.

[ 24 : 34 ] The more you're inclined to violence the more you should practice gentleness. Temper your lion's courage marriage with the meekness of the dove.

And Farrell had to learn the mind of Christ in this matter. And at times he got it wrong. But as he grew spiritually he learned to be more gentle, became more and more useful and he became the force that he was for the reformation in Switzerland and also in France.

Now Paul had much to say to the Corinthians on their worldly behaviour but he dealt with them gently. He called them brothers. But he reminded them that they had the mind of Christ and they had to use it.

And they had to judge their own worldly mindset. They couldn't change unless they exercised judgment.

in chapter 11 verse 31 for instance he said if we judged ourselves we would not come under judgment.

[ 25 : 51 ] We would not come under the judgment of God. And in context Paul was dealing with those who had a proud selfish worldly view of their own prestige and wealth and despised others.

They expressed their worldly view of themselves within the church and they failed to recognise the nature of the church. So Paul urged them to judge themselves and avoid the chastening of the Lord.

Now do you have the mind of Christ? If you do you will soon find yourself judging the minds of the world, its philosophies and its religions. The Lord Jesus Christ judged the world in its wisdom.

He challenged its empty religion. He challenged its unbelief and its materialism. And if you've got his mind dwelling in you, inevitably you too will judge these things.

And you cannot sit on the fence, but you must do so with gentleness and humility as you judge them. And it's so hard, so hard isn't it, to do that.

[ 27 : 07 ] And as you judge and reject the world, it'll have its consequences. It did for him. And as we increasingly adopt the mind of Christ, the world will notice and make judgments of us.

At the very least, it will regard us as being strange or peculiar or different. We look at 1 Peter chapter 4.

Therefore, since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind. For he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh for the lusts of men, but for the will of God.

For we have spent enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lewdness, lust, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries.

In regard to these, they think it's strange that you do not run with them in the same flood of dissipation, speaking evil of you.

[ 28 : 28 ] and if you have the mind of Christ, it's inevitable that you will suffer from those who misunderstand, from those who don't have the mind of Christ.

And we shall be judged in as much as we share his mind. John 15, verse 18, if the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first.

Now that raises the question, does the world judge you rightly? Are believers in North Korea judged rightly by the government of that country?

Are believers judged rightly when they're butchered by Burka Haram in Nigeria? And what if you lose your job or demoted in this country because of your commitment to Christ?

And it does happen. Are you being judged rightly? And what if you apply for a job and are rejected because of your faith in Christ?

[ 29 : 41 ] Is that right judgment? Is that a right assessment of you? 1 Corinthians 2.15, he who is spiritual judges all things yet he himself is not subject to any man's judgment or in some versions not judged rightly.

This is because the spiritual man taught by the Lord has the mind of the Lord. Who can instruct God? And if you have his mind and you're judged by this world you're not judged rightly.

So where does all law and order come from? Is there an overall authority in this world? Well I know some of your minds are going around at this point and you're saying well Jesus said all authority has been given to me in heaven and earth.

And our task is to learn from him even though government and employers and others operate with the wisdom of this world.

Sometimes families disown believers because of their faith. They make a judgment on them but it's not a right judgment because it's contrary to the mind of Christ.

[ 31 : 11 ] And sometimes even churches and religious organisations operate with the wisdom of this world. And faithful believers are judged and disfellowshipped for their faithfulness to Christ.

Sometimes religious groups can make it very clear that you're not welcome because you have the mind of Christ. Their members don't like you because you take his word seriously.

Come back to Isaiah again. Isaiah chapter 66 and verse 5. Hear the word of the Lord you who tremble at his word you who take God's word seriously you who bow to the mind of Christ hear the word of the Lord you who tremble at his word your brothers who hate you and exclude you because of my name have said let the Lord be glorified that we may see your joy yet they shall be put to shame.

Those who persecute you may sound very pious they may sound so godly and so righteous as they profess that they want God's name to be glorified.

They may dismiss you or avoid you and indicate that they're doing it for your good but they don't necessarily have the mind of Christ. they operate according to the principles of this world and live according to his wisdom.

[ 32 : 45 ] If you read about how martyrs were treated by self righteous religious persecutors you'll see just that. You'll see their persecutors were very self righteous they said we're doing it for the glory of God and yet they were so cruel in their judgments but they didn't judge rightly.

And if you think that you're suffering for Christ's sake well you might well be judged but be careful. You might be being judged rightly.

Your attitudes might be wrong. You might not have spoken gently or humbly. You might have been high handed and proud. Listen again to Peter's expansion of this theme.

1 Peter 3 verse 15 always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that you have but do this with gentleness and respect keeping a clear conscience that those who speak maliciously against your good behaviour in Christ might be ashamed for their slander for it is better if it is God's will to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.

Jesus said that he was gentle and humble and lowly in heart and if you truly have his mind when you're judged you will not be judged rightly.

[ 34 : 25 ] But haven't we all made mistakes? Can't you look back on times when you've been proud and high handed and you've dismissed those who disagree with you even on matters of the truth?

And perhaps you're ashamed for the way you've spoken the way you've behaved. But you do have the mind of Christ.

You've actually come to the cross. You've seen that there on the cross God did something for the forgiveness of your sin and you know that God is for you.

He loved you so freely, so wonderfully as to give his only begotten son for you. And God is for you. And as regards judgment, think about that great day of judgment when we'll all appear before the judgment seat of Christ.

It is he who's the judge. He who died for you. He to whom you belong. Yes, you have got failures.

[ 35 : 37 ] You've got dozens of failures. Your life is littered with times when you've let the Lord down. But you brought them to Christ. You've laid all your sins at the bottom of the cross and you've trusted in him.

And you've got complete forgiveness. There's no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. No one will judge you incorrectly on that day.

The Lord Jesus Christ will say he is mine. In a very real sense, it will be seen on that day that no one can judge you rightly.

Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. God, we come before you and ask that you forgive us that we are not diligent in searching out your word, in finding out your mind.

And we pray that you'll help us to be more serious in learning a right from you. And we pray that the world around us will not have any reason to make bad judgments of us.

[ 37 : 02 ] Help us to live such lives that they can only give you glory. For we ask it in our Saviour's name. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Even that they are simple the way to live and stent in life.

Amen. Amen. Please walk you through to settle our