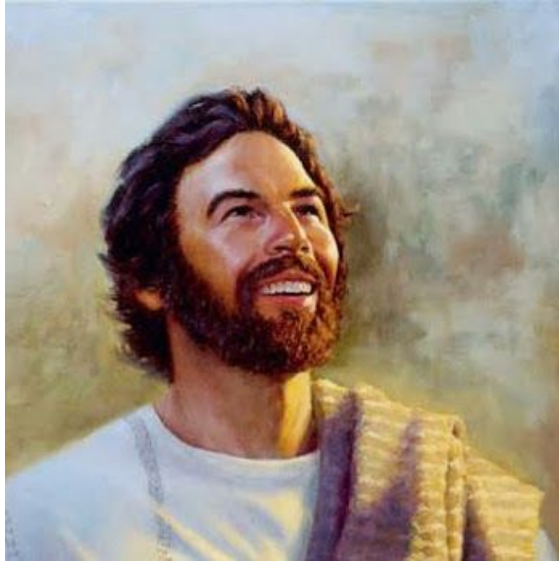


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 Truly Wise
 

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Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem!

Behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the war horse from Jerusalem; and the battle bow shall be cut off, and he shall speak peace to the nations; his rule shall be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth. (Zech 9:9-10)

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At that time Jesus declared, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. All things have been handed

over to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. (Matt 11:25-30)

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The sermon was perfect: simple, touching, and with a clear message. Fr. John was impressed and upset at the same time. He could not understand. Here was a factory worker preaching a way better than him. Sitting at the back of the chapel, he could observe how the others were listening and many were taking notes. It has never happened during his own sermons. How is it possible that a factory worker preaches better than a doctor of theology? He came out of that chapel hearing the words of Jesus: "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding

and revealed them to little children" (Matt 11:25).

### The Paradox of Wisdom

The Greek word used in this passage to describe the wise is "sophos". It is the base word for those famous Greek philosophers known as sophists, extremely clever and persuasive orators opposed by Socrates and Plato. They charged high fees for teaching, so only few could afford their education and they were more concerned with the art of arguing than with establishing the truth.

Jesus and his disciples were facing such type of people. The pharisees and the scribes were experts in the law of Moses and yet they could not accept Jesus as the full revelation of God's love for humanity. When Paul proclaimed the Gospel many Jewish people opposed it and many Greek people laughed at it. How could they believe that God decided to save the world through a crucified messiah? How could they believe that there is life after death? Paul says: "Brothers, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things – and the things that are not – to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him" (1 Cor 1: 26-29). Only those little ones accepted the truth that Jesus of Nazareth, a crucified man, is the Son of God and the Savior of the World.

We live in similar times. There are many sophists around us who have mastered the art of persuasion and argue that there is no God and no truth. At the same time, poor and ordinary people all over the world are coming to Christ. Our sophists are unable to realise that true wisdom does not reveal itself in clever words but in transformed lives. "Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good conduct let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom" (James 3:13). True wisdom is practical and life-changing. "Life without faith is empty and joyless", says a Chinese Christian. "In Jesus, I have found dignity, which the caste system refused to give me", says a Christian Dalit. The intelligentsia of this world does not get it. Their "worship" of reason, might, and mammon blinds them to God's truth. They miss the advice of Jeremiah: "Let not the wise man

boast in his wisdom, let not the mighty man boast in his might, let not the rich man boast in his riches, but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, declares the Lord" (Jer 9:23-24). As it can be seen, the knowledge of God is very practical: steadfast love, justice, and righteousness. However, full knowledge and understanding of God can only come from faith in Jesus. "All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him" (Matt 11:27). The truth about God is visibly expressed in Jesus. His life speaks about God's grace and love. Only those who can grasped this truth are truly wise.

## Conclusion

Gagarin, the first man in cosmos, supposed to say after his flight that the scenery was marvellous but he did not find God there. A four year old Sachi, after the birth of his brother, asked the parents to be left alone with him in room. The parents agreed, but they were ready to enter at any sign of danger. They watched Sachi coming to her brother and heard her whispering: "My little brother, tell me how is God? I am beginning to forget."

Let me finish with Paul's advice. "Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you thinks that he is wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise. For the wisdom of this world is folly with God" (1 Cor 3:18-19). Take it to your heart, my sister and brother. Knowledge might be power in this world but only faith in the life-changing message of Jesus can save us and the whole world.