

Message Three

God's Power and God's Wisdom

JL Hymns: 24, 197

Scripture Reading: 1 Cor. 1:2, 23-24, 30; Rom. 6:6, 19, 22; Eph. 1:9, 11; 3:11

- 1 Cor 1:2 To the church of God which is in Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, the called saints, with all those who call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place, who is theirs and ours:
- 1 Cor 1:23 But we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block, and to Gentiles foolishness,
- 1 Cor 1:24 But to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.
- 1 Cor 1:30 But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became wisdom to us from God: both righteousness and sanctification and redemption,
- Rom 6:6 Knowing this, that our old man has been crucified with Him in order that the body of sin might be annulled, that we should no longer serve sin as slaves;
- Rom 6:19 I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves to uncleanness and lawlessness unto lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness unto sanctification.
- Rom 6:22 But now, having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you have your fruit unto sanctification, and the end, eternal life.
- Eph 1:9 Making known to us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Himself,
- Eph 1:11 In whom also we were designated as an inheritance, having been predestinated according to the purpose of the One who works all things according to the counsel of His will,
- Eph 3:11 According to the eternal purpose which He made in Christ Jesus our Lord,

I. Before mentioning Christ as the power of God and the wisdom of God in 1 Corinthians 1:24 Paul, in verse 23, declares, “We preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block, and to Gentiles foolishness”:

- 1 Cor 1:24 But to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.
- A. This indicates that the Christ who is the power of God and the wisdom of God for the carrying out of God's economy is the crucified Christ, a Christ who did not do anything to save Himself—v. 24.
- 1 Cor 1:24 But to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.
- B. In man's eyes, if a person is crucified, he is deemed powerless, because a powerful person would not allow himself to be crucified; nevertheless, the Christ who is the power of God was crucified.
- C. Furthermore, from the human perspective, a wise person would find ways to avoid crucifixion, yet the Christ who is the wisdom of God was crucified—Gal. 2:20.
- Gal 2:20 I am crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.
- D. The crucified Christ is the power of God—1 Cor. 1:24:
- 1 Cor 1:24 But to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.
1. In the cross of Christ we see God's power.
 2. It takes the power of God to defeat Satan, the world, sin, fallen man, the flesh, the natural life, the old creation, and the ordinances.
 3. The death of Christ—His crucifixion—has become the power of God—v. 24.
- 1 Cor 1:24 But to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.
- E. The crucified Christ is the wisdom of God—2:7:
- 1 Cor 2:7 But we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, the wisdom which has been hidden, which God predestined before the ages for our glory,

1. In order to accomplish anything, we need Christ as both power and wisdom—1:24.
 1 Cor 1:24 But to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.
 2. Wisdom is for planning and purposing, whereas power is for carrying out and accomplishing what is planned and purposed.
 3. When we experience the crucified Christ, He becomes to us not only the power of God but also the wisdom of God—Rom. 6:6; Gal. 2:20.
 Rom 6:6 Knowing this, that our old man has been crucified with Him in order that the body of sin might be annulled, that we should no longer serve sin as slaves;
 Gal 2:20 I am crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.
 4. The crucified Christ as God's wisdom is related to God's deep and profound plan according to His good pleasure and also according to God's way to fulfill His will—Eph. 1:9, 11; 3:11:
 Eph 1:9 Making known to us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Himself,
 Eph 1:11 In whom also we were designated as an inheritance, having been predestinated according to the purpose of the One who works all things according to the counsel of His will,
 Eph 3:11 According to the eternal purpose which He made in Christ Jesus our Lord,
 - a. Since we have the crucified Christ as God's wisdom, there is no need for us to seek a way to carry out God's will.
 - b. Simply by experiencing the crucified Christ, we spontaneously have a way to do God's will.
 - c. We become very wise in doing the will of God—Col. 1:9; 4:12.
 Col 1:9 Therefore we also, since the day we heard of it, do not cease praying and asking on your behalf that you may be filled with the full knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding,
 Col 4:12 Epaphras, who is one of you, a slave of Christ Jesus, greets you, always struggling on your behalf in his prayers that you may stand mature and fully assured in all the will of God.
 - d. As long as we experience the crucified Christ, Christ will become to us God's wisdom to fulfill His plan; we will have the wisdom of God to do His will—1:9.
 Col 1:9 Therefore we also, since the day we heard of it, do not cease praying and asking on your behalf that you may be filled with the full knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding,
- F. When we experience the crucified Christ, we are terminated—Gal. 2:20:
 Gal 2:20 I am crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.
1. All that we are, all that we have, and all that we can do—all is completely terminated.
 2. When we call on the name of the Lord Jesus, as we are experiencing and enjoying Him, His crucifixion will terminate us.
 3. Christ crucified is not only the power but also the way for us to be delivered from the flesh, the natural life, and the old creation.

II. As those who are called by God, we need to know and experience Christ's power and wisdom—1 Cor. 1:24:

1 Cor 1:24 But to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

A. First Corinthians 1:2 mentions "the called saints":

1. The believers in Christ are called saints, not called to be saints; this is a positional matter, a sanctification in position with a view to sanctification indisposition.

2. To call upon the name of the Lord implies to believe into Him—Rom. 10:14.
Rom 10:14 How then shall they call upon Him into whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe into Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without one who proclaims Him?
3. All the believers in the Lord should be callers—Acts 9:14, 21; 22:16.
Acts 9:14 And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call upon Your name.
Acts 9:21 And all who heard him were amazed and said, Is this not the one who ravaged those who call upon this name in Jerusalem and came here for this, that he might bring them bound before the chief priests?
Acts 22:16 And now, why do you delay? Rise up and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on His name.
4. We have been called to call, called by God to call upon the name of the Lord.
5. To those called by God, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God.
- B. *Those who are called* (1 Cor. 1:24) refers to the believers who were chosen by God in eternity (Eph. 1:4) and who believed in Christ in time (Acts 13:48).
1 Cor 1:24 But to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.
Eph 1:4 Even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world to be holy and without blemish before Him in love,
Acts 13:48 And the Gentiles, hearing this, rejoiced and glorified the word of the Lord; and as many as were appointed to eternal life believed.
- C. To those who believe in Christ and call upon His name, He is the power of God and the wisdom of God.
- D. Christ crucified is the power of God for saving us and the wisdom of God for fulfilling His plan:
 1. Power is the ability, and wisdom is the way.
 2. Christ is first our power, and then He is our wisdom, that is, our way.
 3. Christ is the power of God to carry out God's economy, and He is also the wisdom of God, the way of God, to carry out God's economy.
- E. Christ as the power of God strengthens us with a dynamic power, supplying and sustaining us in what we are and what we do:
 1. In all our circumstances and conditions, Christ as the power of God enables us to suffer, to bear burdens, and to stand firm.
 2. He also sustains us to the point of being unshakable; for this reason, Paul declares, "I am able to do all things in Him who empowers me"—Phil. 4:13.
 3. Christ as the power of God is daily supplying and sustaining us through His divine dispensing.
- F. Christ as the wisdom of God flows unceasingly from God to us to be our present and practical wisdom in our experience—1 Cor. 1:24.
1 Cor 1:24 But to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

III. "Of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became wisdom to us from God: both righteousness and sanctification and redemption"—v. 30:

- A. In this verse Paul does not say that Christ became our wisdom; instead, he says that Christ became wisdom "to us from God":
 1. The expression *to us from God* indicates something present, practical, experiential, and ongoing in the way of transmission.
 2. For Christ to become wisdom to us from God indicates that there is the transmission of Christ as wisdom from God to us for our daily experience.
 3. We need Christ continually as wisdom to us from God.

- B. Christ became wisdom to us from God as three vital things in God's salvation:
1. He is our righteousness (for our past), by which we have been justified by God, that we might be reborn in our spirit to receive the divine life—Rom. 5:18.
Rom 5:18 So then as it was through one offense unto condemnation to all men, so also it was through one righteous act unto justification of life to all men.
 2. He is our sanctification (for our present), by which we are being sanctified in our soul, that is, transformed in our mind, emotion, and will, with His divine life—6:19, 22.
Rom 6:19 I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves to uncleanness and lawlessness unto lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness unto sanctification.
Rom 6:22 But now, having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you have your fruit unto sanctification, and the end, eternal life.
 3. He is our redemption (for our future), that is, the redemption of our body (8:23), by which we will be transfigured in our body with His divine life to have His glorious likeness (Phil. 3:21).
Rom 8:23 And not only so, but we ourselves also, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan in ourselves, eagerly awaiting sonship, the redemption of our body.
Phil 3:21 Who will transfigure the body of our humiliation to be conformed to the body of His glory, according to His operation by which He is able even to subject all things to Himself.
 4. It is of God that we participate in such a complete and perfect salvation, which makes our entire being—spirit, soul, and body—organically one with Christ and makes Christ everything to us.
 5. This is altogether of God, not of ourselves, that we may boast and glory in Him, not in ourselves—Eph. 3:20-21.
Eph 3:20 But to Him who is able to do superabundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power which operates in us,
Eph 3:21 To Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus unto all the generations forever and ever. Amen.