
THE MIND OF THE SPIRIT

Session I: Wisdom of God

I. The Problem

A. Stats

1. One in four people are affected at some point by a mental or neurological disorder worldwide.
2. 1.9 million children in the U.S. have been diagnosed with depression.
3. There are three suicides for every two homicides in the United States.
4. 19.7 million American adults struggled with substance abuse.
5. 77% of American adults report they regularly experience physical symptoms caused by stress.
6. 48% of adults believe that their stress level has increased over the last 5 years.

B. My Story

II. The Challenge

A. Sin disrupted the wisdom and peace of mind that God intended.

B. The further that humans moved away from God, the more our minds darkened.

1. Romans 1:21-23 (NIV), *"For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like a mortal human being and birds and animals and reptiles."*
2. The glory of God implies the image of God. In Genesis 1:27 (NIV) *"So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them."*

C. Ingratitude and the search for a new "god" to worship has distorted creation.

D. The image of God was lost and deformed in us. We become like the person or object we worship.

E. God's punishment was to allow humans to sink into the kind of thinking that they had chosen. Sometimes the worst punishment is to receive what you want.

F. Humanity's true identity was lost.

III. Wisdom of God vs. The Wisdom of the World

A. Paul recognized the philosophies, or ideas, of his age could not fix a corrupted mind. --

1. 1 Corinthians 1:20 (NRSV) *"Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?"*

2. The Corinthian church was in love with concept of wisdom in their culture. In 1 Corinthians Paul was challenging their ideas and proving them to be false.
 - B. "The creator and sustainer of the universe has brought an end to human self-sufficiency as that is evidenced through human wisdom and devices."—Gordon Fee
 1. The philosophy of the current age, the first century, looked to their own powers of reason to repair broken thinking. They looked to their own power.
 2. Paul affirms that this is not possible. Instead, it is only through the cross that true change is effected.
 3. 1 Corinthians 1:25 (NRSV) *"For God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength."*
 - C. The Christian worldview was incompatible with the ideas of wisdom in the first century
 1. A crucified Messiah was seen as a curse among the Jewish.
 - a) Deuteronomy 21:23, *"anyone who is hung on a pole is under God's curse."*
 - b) The Jews believed that the Messiah was supposed to win military victories, not die on a cross.
 2. A crucified Lord was seen as ridiculous among the Greeks or Romans.
 - a) Crucifixion was reserved for only the worst criminals in society.
 - b) A crucified person was someone to be mocked, not worshipped. The word for "foolishness" or "folly" carries the idea of madness.
 - c) 1 Corinthians 1:18 (NIV) *"For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing"*
 - D. The confidence of humans in themselves must die at the cross. The cross is the only way we can be redeemed, and our thinking changed.
 - E. 2 Corinthians 10:5 (NRSV) *"We destroy arguments and every proud obstacle raised up against the knowledge of God, and we take every thought captive to obey Christ."*
 1. The wisdom of this world pales in comparison to the wisdom of God.
 2. Worldly wisdom puffs us up. It pretends to be the highest level of thinking, but God's wisdom demolishes it.
 3. We have the power through Christ to take our thoughts captive. They become prisoners and powerless to hold us captive.
- IV. Application
- A. The power to think differently is first and foremost a cross-centered approach.
 - B. Through Christ our mind can be transformed, and we can find victory in our thoughts. We are not prisoners of a diagnosis. We are more than conquerors through Jesus.