

Dr. Gary Meadors, 1 Corinthians, Lecture 13

1 Corinthians 3 and 4, Paul's Response to the Oral Communique from Chloe's Household

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This is Dr. Gary Meadors in his teaching on the book of 1 Corinthians. This is lecture 13, Paul's Response to the Oral Communique from Chloe's Household, 1 Corinthians 3 and 4.

Well, join with me as we continue our journey through 1 Corinthians. We're in notepad number 7, and we're on; I'm going to start with page 57 to review and lead us up to page 58 through the end of this chapter.

We have some very significant issues to discuss as we continue in chapters 1 to 4, particularly now in chapter 2, and it may take us a little more time than what seems appropriate for these chapters. We could take forever to get through the book of 1 Corinthians, of course, but there are some very important issues that Paul sets forth about his authority and about the nature of the gospel that comes out, particularly in chapter 2, that I'm going to be spending some time with you about. So, I want to be sure that you hang in here for this journey through 1 Corinthians.

I also thought about if we were in a normal classroom and I walked into the classroom to teach. It's always been my habit to start classes with prayer, typically having someone in the class or myself. It is a little different online in that regard.

I don't treat prayer as a superstition; that is, if we pray, everything will be better than if we didn't. I always pray as I prepare these lectures. I'm sure that you pray as you audit them and do your own research, and I think that's what pattern will follow as we proceed.

We'll assume, and I think rightly so, that we are bathing our work in prayer. Prayer is not a shortcut to the hard work of interpretation, but it's obviously an important thing for us to bow before God and admit that we're imperfect creatures and that we need God to help us focus, God to help us to stick with the task that he's given us to do and to enable us in that regard. The Bible assures us that he does, even though it doesn't always unpack that and explain it in exactly the way that we might like to know.

So, let's come to page 57, and we are at point B in the middle of the page. Paul evaluates the problem of division, which Chloé's household reported as existing in the Corinthian church. I don't think I need to repeat the fact that this problem of division is explained, as we dealt with in the last lecture, as a problem of

competitiveness between teacher and students, between an authoritative teacher and a community.

They treated things with competitiveness and loyalty to certain teachers that created divisions because they were acting in a secular fashion, according to 1 Corinthians 3. And Paul's coming in and dealing with that. I'm outlining it just a little differently here to track what I think is the logic of this passage. First of all, as he evaluates this problem and evaluates the problem of division, he points out that it was pseudo-human wisdom.

We've explained to you, and I hope that perhaps you've been able to read some of Bruce Winter's material about what that means. It has to do with a sophistry sort of approach to understanding that was a part of Roman Corinth, and that has created divisions in itself because of the competitiveness of different views. He addresses human pride from 26 to 31.

The Corinthians need to remember that they weren't so high and mighty when they were converted, even though there were some powerful and probably rich people who were involved in this early Corinthian church, but most of them were not in that category. And even those who were are reminded that it's not by might nor power, but by God's grace and God's Spirit that truth moves forward. The third thing on page 58 is that divided attitudes failed to properly evaluate Paul's original ministry with the Corinthians.

They thought that he wasn't so hot when he came to them because he didn't come to them clothed in Roman Corinth social status and teacher expectations that they had within their culture. He seemed to be weak, but in his weakness was his strength. And Paul reminds them of that in chapter 2, verses 1 to 5. Then, the fourth item of treating these divisions, in the middle of page 58, is division, which results from a failure to appreciate the source and authority of Paul's message.

Now, to me, 26 to 16 is very, very, very much at the core of Paul addressing the pushback from the Corinthians. They were pushing back on Paul. We look back and we revere Paul as an apostle, but to them, Paul was a contemporary, and because he didn't clothe himself in the social structures that they wanted, they didn't view him as highly as we do as we look back.

And they were just pushing back on Paul, disagreeing with Paul, and not giving Paul the respect that he deserved as an apostle. They were saying to Paul, well, what makes you think you've got the right slant on all this new message about Christianity? What makes you so much better than the rest of us? Talbot pours Paul into the Mediterranean teacher mode at this point, and Paul in 26 to 16, as we shall shortly see, had an esoteric piece to his teaching. But Paul was not the teacher of the Roman social status that these people wanted.

He was coming from the angle of divine revelation. God had revealed the truth. Paul was sharing that truth, and the Corinthians needed to recognize that was the authority.

It wasn't so much Paul, and it was the message that Paul gave that God had given to Paul and approved that they should be listening to and heeding what Paul had to deliver to them. Now, Paul reveals the nature of gospel wisdom in 26 to 16, but particularly in 26 to 9. You'll notice in the progress of my outline now I'm unpacking 26 to 16 in the text. I'd sort of like to read it to you, but because our lectures get so long, I'm going to let you stop perhaps and read that if you haven't already read it before the day began.

In 26 through 9, at the bottom of page 58, Paul reveals the nature of gospel wisdom. And yes, I must read it. Listen to 6 through 9. We'll take it in these smaller bites.

I'm reading from the 2011 NIV. We do, however, speak a message of wisdom. Now, wisdom is 21 times in chapters 1 to 4. Here's a good wisdom, see? There's good wisdom.

There's worldly wisdom. We've got wisdom in competition. Which wisdom are you going to choose? Paul says we, however, speak a message of wisdom among the mature, but not the wisdom of this age.

Okay, we're going to contrast wisdom now. Or the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. No, we declare God's wisdom a mystery, a musterion, a mystery that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began.

None of the rulers of this age understood this mystery. For if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. They didn't get it.

However, as it is written, what no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, and what no human mind has conceived are the things God prepared for those who love him. Let me say, first of all, verse 9 has nothing to do with heaven. This verse is often grabbed and applied to the idea of us going to heaven, something that God has prepared for those who love him.

That's not what Paul's talking about here. He's not talking about heaven. He's talking about information.

He's talking about the content of revelation. Now let's look at 2:6 through 9 a bit more. The bottom of page 58.

The key to understanding 2:6 to 16 resides in the identification of some pronouns and antecedents. Up to verse 6 and then after verse 16, the pronouns are prominently in the second person. You, Corinthians.

You, you, you. But when it comes to 2 to 6 to 16, he shifts to the first-person plural. We.

Now, we could be the entire Christian community, but there is a marginalizing in 2:6 to 16 of those Christians who are not coming along in understanding God's message to them. Some have suggested that the pronouns in 2:6 to 16 are primarily focused on Paul and his community, mainly the apostolic community because they're the ones through whom God is giving the true message and using them to communicate that message. It was a revelatory event, and I want to show you that in the flow of this passage.

So, I'm going to think about the we in 6 to 16 as being the apostolic community. It's not just anybody. And why is that? Because Paul is responding to this Corinthian pushback, why does Paul think he's so bright? Where does Paul think he gets the authority to define the message? Paul's answer to them is that God revealed this message to the apostles and gave them the responsibility to share that message with the community.

That's the mode of thinking, I believe, that we have to have. And in the flow of chapters 1 to 4, he's been treating this division. He's been treating the problem of them not getting the message of the cross adequately and their pushback on Paul and his ministry.

Then he comes in 6 to 16, right in the middle of chapters 1 through 4, and makes it very clear that it's not Paul's message. It's God's message. It's not Paul's bright idea.

It's revelatory truth, even using that technical term revelation, as we'll see in verse 10. So in 2, 6 to 9, the first person plural, the first person, is used throughout the passage—verse 6, verse 7, verse 10, verse 12, verse 13, verse 16.

It's not used before or after. It's always the second person pronoun. It's Paul and the Corinthian community, but this time, it's the we.

And I think it's the we who are giving the message to the Corinthian community, which is the apostolic community. 3:1 and 2:6 appear to relate to one another and imply that the pronouns of 2, 6 to 16 either refer to Paul and his kind, that is, the writers of scripture, God's apostles and prophets, God's vehicles for revealing divine wisdom, or they primarily refer to Paul himself with the humble courtesy of a plural for Paul's associates, the we. But the bottom line is that Paul is standing here in a very real sense and defending his right to define the message, his right to proclaim

the message, and his right to expect the Corinthians to acquiesce to Paul's teaching and not to push back.

The nature of gospel or wisdom, page 59, is such that it is only received in verse 6 by the spiritual or by the mature. If you'll notice in 2, 6, it says, we do, however, speak a message of wisdom among the mature. In 2, 6, I just want to bring a word to your attention here, but we speak a message of wisdom among the mature.

It comes from the word teleos. Teleos, you get the word teleology, which means looking down through the future. You get the word telescope even out of this particular word.

But it's looking off to the end of something. The end of understanding is maturity among the mature.

It doesn't use the word spiritual. The version in the NIV says among the mature. See, it doesn't say spiritual.

I should have kept it; this is another one of those places where seeing the continuum of the versions and how they translate is important. I have a pretty confident opinion that when I look at the NRSV here, sorry, I have to take time to turn to it; I should have had it open. Yet among the mature, it uses the same word, mature.

But if I remember correctly, I believe the King James Version might have used the word spiritual. That's where a certain stereotype comes out of 2:6, but it has to do with maturity and full growth. Spirituality comes a little later in 2:15, and we'll talk about it there.

The nature of gospel wisdom is delineated in 7 through 9. Just what is this gospel wisdom? Well, it's God's wisdom as he tells us. I've given you, in essence, a little diagram there in the middle of page 59, a simplified one. We speak wisdom in verse 7, but we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, having been revealed, and so forth and so on.

Notice what kind of wisdom is in the outline. It's God's wisdom. Notice the paragraph in the chart. It's a wisdom in a mystery.

Mysterion is a technical term in the New Testament for God's revealing the things that are developing within that first century with Jesus, with the coming of the church as an entity to be the entity through which God continues to communicate the gospel to the world. A shift in a sense from the nation of Israel into the church. It is not doing away with Israel in any sense, but it merges into this new entity we call the church.

It's a mystery. It's a sacred secret heretofore concealed but now revealed. It's coming to the surface.

It's a mystery that hath been hidden, which God foreordained. It's something that God knew from even the foundations of the world, but it's a mystery that the rulers didn't know. Now, using rulers here is merely a rhetorical device to say the intelligentsia of the world.

They didn't get it. It was proclaimed. They didn't accept it.

They didn't follow this idea. But the interesting piece to this, as it flows, is that none of the rulers of this age understood. If they had known, they would not have crucified the Lord.

That's an amazing statement, isn't it? They didn't get God's breaking into earth history. However, as it is written, and here comes that interesting little phrase that I pointed out to you a moment ago, eye has not seen, ear has not heard, the human mind has not conceived. It hasn't entered into the mind of man as the old formal translation.

The human mind has not conceived the things God has prepared for those who love him. I mentioned to you that this passage is often picked up, drawn out, and applied to the idea of heaven, but it has absolutely nothing to do with heaven. What does it have to do with? It has to do with, here comes a, you'd rather have the word heaven after this, the word epistemology.

Epistemology. That's the big word for how we know what we know, what it is that we actually know, what the sources of our knowledge are, and what the nature of our knowledge is. Well, look at what we have. Epistemology has to do with all these issues about knowledge.

No eye has seen. There is an empirical avenue: the eye. No ear has heard, another empirical avenue.

It hasn't entered into the mind of man. No human mind has conceived. In the formal understanding of epistemology, in the sources of knowledge, you have the source of the senses, eyes, ears, and touch.

You have the source of reason, the mind. I could be in my house today, and all of a sudden, a Florida rain could come through. I don't have to look outside to see rain.

I don't have to go outside and get wet and say, oh, it's raining. If I hear it on the roof, I can reason from the sound that it's raining. That rational aspect, the senses, and reason are the avenues that human beings use to access knowledge.

The human rulers of the world use their senses. They were rational, but they still didn't get it. Why? Why didn't they get it? Because they couldn't.

To reason yourself to God, you have to take some steps that can get you there. For example, Psalm 19 is a famous psalm. The heavens declare the glory of God.

The firmament showeth his handiwork. Day into day utter speech. Night shows forth his glory.

And we think, well, an atheist ought to be able to go outside and look up in the sky and know there's a God. No, the atheist goes outside, shakes their fist in the sky, and says, if there is a God, strike me dead, and arrogantly walks away alive. You see, it's not looking at the sky and the wonders of our universe that brings us to an understanding that there's a God.

It's looking at the sky and the wonders of the universe from the perspective that there is a God and that he created this and that it shows forth his glory. God prepared all of that for us, but God prepared something else for us. At the end of verse 9, we are in a dilemma.

It says no eye can see, no ear can hear, and none of the empirical ways or senses can give it to us. It can't enter the human mind. Reason can't give it to us.

And by the way, another aspect of epistemology formally is what's known as intuition. Intuition isn't what you ladies have. Intuition, in the religious sense, is something dawning that cannot be explained from any other source than some sort of divine initiation.

It hasn't entered into the heart of man. These rulers don't have that. The things that God has prepared for those who love him.

Well, what is it that God has prepared for those who love him? In this context, it's the cross. It's the wisdom of God on the cross and in Christ. That's what the reference is.

Verse 10 in the next unit delivers us from the dilemma of not knowing. Let me paint this to you in another way, and I wish that I would have included a chart in the notes at this point, but I didn't. So let me give you a picture of it.

Imagine my hand here. You know, I can't make it quite as sharp, and it goes out here. An open triangle.

All right. God entered, and this open triangle represents all created reality. Everything that's ever come into existence.

Right here is God in eternity past creates the world. Into the world, he places Adam and Eve in the garden. He gives them only one command in the negative, and that is, do not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

What was the name of that tree, by the way? It wasn't the tree of emotions. It wasn't the tree of what do you think? It was the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Something that God had established.

Don't eat from that tree. One command alone, and they couldn't do it. We won't go into all those details in Genesis now as it presents it to us, but they couldn't do it.

They sinned. Sin merely means transgression of the revealed will of God. They violated what God said do not do, and they did it anyway.

They knew they had done it because all of a sudden, they had a consciousness of what was wrong. They had a consciousness of not being what God wanted them to be, and when God came to the garden, they hid because they were afraid of that confrontation. God chased them out of the garden, and that established what we call the fall.

We have creation. We have fallen, probably not too long after the creation week and the creation of Adam and Eve, they fell. All right, then we have the rest of history.

The rest of history, but what happened is this. As we try to look back to God, we just kind of picture that this all created reality. Here's God over here.

We're trying to get back to God. Every time we try to get back to God, we hit a wall. It's called the fall, and it deflects us off into other directions so that we cannot adequately get to God as Adam and Eve could get to God in the original garden.

The fall created the problem of distortion, the problem of deflection. This passage actually is going to tell us how to overcome that. How do you overcome not being able to get to God? How do you overcome not knowing the will of God and what God wants? Well, it comes in verse 10.

Look what it says here. What are these? This is the reference to these things of the wisdom of God, the things that the world doesn't know, but God has done what? These are the things God has, and there's the word, revealed to us by his spirit. Once again, remember this is Paul's apology.

It's his apologetic to the Corinthians to establish his teaching as authoritative teaching. Not Paul the authority, even though he is, but Paul's teaching as the authority. Why is it an authority? Because God gave it to him.

He and his apostolic community are the vehicle through which revealed truth came to the world. Before that, when we look to God, we get distortion, we get a deflection, but the word of God is, as it were, the umbrella over the triangle so that when we need to know about God, we can go to God's word. Now, there's still a bit of distortion, but it's not here; it's here.

We still have a mental effect of the fall, and God has incorporated that into us being created in his image, into a world where sometimes we have diversity among believing people, and we work through that, and we live with it until the eschaton. But the fact is, is that when it says no eye has seen, no ear has heard, it hasn't entered into the mind of man, the things that God has prepared for those who love him, God revealed it because it's not going to be there without that revelation, without the word of God, without the teaching of scriptures. We are at sea without a paddle.

We have no way to maneuver. We have no way to guide our paths. The scriptures are the foundation of our epistemology.

Without it, we're lost. We have no path to go. Let me use a simple illustration I hope will be communicated to you.

Say that you had a choice. Here's your choice. You can have 24 hours with Jesus one-on-one, and you don't have to learn to speak Greek.

He's going to speak English or whatever your language is. You got 24 hours with Jesus. Hey, you can even have a tape recorder.

I'm going to give you a video. You make that an idol. You can have a tape recorder.

24 hours. You can choose that, 24 hours with Jesus, even with a tape recorder, or you can choose this, God's word. Now, with the 24 hours with Jesus, that's all you get.

Or this. Which would you rather have? I dare say that if you have good sense, you're going to take the Bible and all the risk and struggle that's involved with trying to figure it out. Because if you've got 24 hours even on a tape, that's not going to answer all your questions.

As soon as Jesus says bye-bye, you're going to have a thousand more questions that you didn't get answered. Now, where are you going to get the answers? I want to tell

you that everything you need to know is contained within scripture, not as a proof text, but as a mindset, as a worldview, as a guide to how to think through the issues of life. Without the Bible, we are lost at sea.

Is the Bible important? You better believe it is. And furthermore, in church culture, the Bible needs to be prominent. In recent decades, some people in our culture have latched onto the term bibliolatry.

Don't be pushing the Bible at me. That's bibliolatry. You're worshiping the Bible.

Well, I suppose somebody could do that in some weird way. But the fact is, my friends, without scripture, you have no knowledge. You have no justification for your beliefs.

You have no guide for your ethics. You have no understanding of who you are in God's Word. That's what this is about in chapter 2:6-16.

Paul is telling the Corinthians that their understanding of the message is wrong. Their divisions are worldly. Paul's authority to tell them is because Paul is God's messenger.

He is the vehicle to transfer that revelation into terms to teach them, and they need to listen. So, we've got a dilemma in 6-9. The dilemma is settled in verse 10.

God revealed. In verses 10-13, Paul states that his wisdom was received by divine revelation. Listen to 10-13.

We've already read 10a. These are the things God has revealed to us by His Spirit. You'll notice that the 2011 NIV starts with a new paragraph of 10b.

The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. For who knows a person's thoughts except their own human spirit within them? In the same way, no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God—10 b.

What we have received is not the Spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may understand what God has freely given us. Now, I'm going to emphasize again the restriction of the pronouns. Paul's talking about the apostolic community.

This isn't just for anybody. This does not apply to me. I don't have the privilege of being an apostle.

He is conveying to us that his authority is because of God's choosing him and his community to communicate these truths, to be the recipients and the vehicles

through whom these truths come. Words taught by the Spirit explaining spiritual realities were Spirit-taught words. Now let me just stop there in 10 through 13.

Paul states that his wisdom was received by direct revelation. The means of revelation is the Spirit of God. The Spirit of God in the Trinity is the vehicle by whom God orchestrated the record of Scripture.

We know that particularly from that same kind of activity with the prophets of the Old Testament, the writers of the Old Testament books. They did things in a very natural way, like in a book like Philemon or 2nd or 3rd John. The apostles in those books may have not even known they were writing Scripture.

They may have thought they were. We don't really know. They never told us exactly, but they were writing letters to people, guiding the church at that particular time.

But God knew, and God orchestrated in ways that really are not explainable. It's understandable. The assertion is understandable.

God took care of it. The explanation of it is beyond us. It's a message.

The information is transmitted in a way that is accurate, and therefore, it is authoritative because it becomes, at the end of the day, God's Word. That's a very important principle within the Judeo-Christian understanding of Scripture. And both Jews and Christians look at the Word of God in a very, very similar way, that it is a Word from God.

It's not man-made, in spite of the fact that men and women throughout Scripture were involved in this process. Very much so. But the wonder of it is that God was able to orchestrate it divinely to bring to fruition the product of what we call Scripture.

Let me say a word about the word inspiration or inspired. You've probably heard that term. Do not talk about Paul being inspired.

Talk about the product of Paul's work when it became Scripture as being inspired. It's not the person. It's the product.

Inspiration does not apply to the people. It applies to the product. Now, God did it through people, but sometimes, we make a mistake in thinking that it applies to the person.

Not everything that Paul wrote, even if we were to find other things, should be categorized as Scripture. But it is those items that Paul wrote, it is those items. Those

items are, I'll get my verb right here, the product of God's orchestration of getting to us His Word.

In fact, this is so difficult to explain to humanity that God didn't even explain it to us. Listen to what it says in verse 13. All the commentaries view this as a very enigmatic passage and one that we struggle to unpack.

But there's a reason for that. It's an assertion, not an explanation. This is what we speak.

That is, we apostles speak this wisdom of God, not in words taught by human wisdom. It's not our bright idea.

But in words taught by the Spirit. Well, how did the Spirit do it? Did they go to the Spirit class? No. It was that enigmatic process of when they were dictating a letter or when Luke said that he researched when he wrote the Gospel of Luke and that they put these things down under the orchestration of God.

It was born from above. Luke even uses that nomenclature as it is used in John 3 for salvation. To be born again is to be born from above.

The Scriptures were born from above through human vehicles. Not only that but look at the massive testimony, particularly in the New Testament, that we talked about earlier. Over 5,000 manuscripts and two manuscripts completely agree.

And it's not that they don't agree mentally, or philosophically, or theologically. It's that they don't agree. Maybe they have a synonym for a word.

Maybe they're even misspelled words. We have human beings who are inscriptions doing this transmission, and they make some stupid mistakes sometimes. If you want to read about that, look up Bruce Metzger, the text of the New Testament.

And Metzger can lead you through understanding the transmission of the New Testament. But in spite of all of the inadequacies of humanity, God still delivers to us a Scripture that is authoritative, that is adequate for all purposes, and that we can depend upon. That is a premise that's very important within the Christian church.

And it's not a blind premise. Some might think that from time to time. There's probably been more scholarship generated about the Bible than any other piece of literature on the planet.

I used to go to the University of Chicago when I was in seminary in another area and drive up there to research. They had six million volumes in the library. It was a consortium library.

This is before there was even a computer. Sorry, I am that old. It was before there was an internet.

You had to go dig it out. You had to go find it. They had nickel copy machines, and I used to take rows of nickels with me and create files for writing papers and theses and dissertations and things of that nature.

Six million books. It was a consortium of Lutheran Theological Seminary, the Chicago Divinity School, and McCormick Seminary, which was a Presbyterian school. They were all close to each other geographically, so they put all the books in one library for convenience.

Wow, what a library. It was like going into catacombs with the stacks of books. It smelled good.

That was fun. Now, you may not think it was fun, but it was fun. Well, we got one.

And how much has it generated in terms of research and technical research? That's not froth sitting on those shelves. This is what we speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in words taught by the spirit. That phrase, by the spirit, is considered to put the spirit into the production phase within that phrase.

Let me, I want to look at something very quickly here with my eyes if I can see it. It's literally, we read it in translation in the NIV, words by the spirit. In the Greek, it is in teachings of spirit.

Spirit is in what's known as the genitive case. I will give you a little Greek lesson here. The genitive case is one of the most interpretive cases, at least a piece of the genitive.

This is known as a subjective genitive. It means that the genitive noun becomes the cause of the action. It's spirit-caused teaching.

CDF Muell, who's a grammarian, says this is what he considers us to be one of the most pronounced subjective genitives in the New Testament. In no uncertain terms, the Bible is a product of the spirit, but it is a product that came through human instrumentality. And yet God orchestrated the entire event, even when they didn't realize they were writing something of that nature, and protected it, and brought it to us, both by God's work and by providence in terms of the bringing together of the canon as the church emerged from isolation in that first century into the third century.

Wow, that's a lot, isn't it? Paul states that wisdom was received by direct revelation. The Spirit of God orchestrated the production of the Word of God. He uses metaphors here.

You can't put it into a test tube. The Spirit searches the God, the Trinity, as our spirit, the human spirit, searches us and has access that we don't have. And the Spirit brought that access and translated it through the apostles into what we call scripture.

In the explanation of the revelation event, the Spirit penetrates the unfathomable. The Spirit, as a member of the Trinity, knows the divine mind even more so than we know ourselves as people. The Spirit was the apostles' source of information.

This happened in so many different ways over a long period of time, but in this musterion, in this mystery that Paul is unpacking for us here, it was a particularly divine, revelatory event that the Spirit orchestrated and operated. That's the whole point of the mystery. We could talk about a lot of things about the journey of Paul and his being stoned and left for dead and his being called up into the third heaven.

And there are so many issues involved here that I have to try to piece together just bits and pieces. But the bottom line is that God communicated the message through Paul. That's why it's authoritative because Paul came up with some bright ideas.

It transcended Paul's capacities as a human being. And God made sure that we were the recipients of the product we call Scripture, which is something that can actually be a guide to our lives. So, Paul affirms on page 60, top of the page, that his speech and teaching is not really his, but that which he received by revelation.

How did that come to him? He wasn't, and I don't think he went into an automatous state. We don't know. We can't really say.

Was it God dictating to him? I sort of doubt it. How did it happen? It's beyond us. It's an assertion, not an explanation.

Paul affirms that his speech or teaching is actually and specifically provided by the Spirit. Paul affirms the method by which he received it. This even gets better if you happen to be a Greek student because the last part of verse 13 is one of the most esoteric and difficult phrases to translate on the planet.

Not in words taught to us by human wisdom, but in words taught by the Spirit, explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words. That's the way the 2011 NIV renders it. Listen to some of the other renditions.

Well, in the King James, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. ASV combines spiritual things with spiritual words. In other words, that's a little more of a process of the apostles making judgments.

The margin of the ASV, interpreting spiritual things to spiritual men. The NASB, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words. NIV original, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words.

And then we saw the new translation here, spiritual realities with spiritual-taught words. The margin of the original NIV said, interpreting spiritual truths to spiritual men. All kinds of things are going on.

The NRSV, interpreting spiritual things to those who are spiritual. The margin, interpreting spiritual things in spiritual language. You can see there is a little bit of a theme here.

Spiritual things, spiritual words. Translating truth into words. Well, I'm not going to go into all the reasons why there is this diversity.

You can read it in the commentaries. A lot of it depends on the problematic issue of having these two terms in verse 13. We have the word *pneuma* in an adjective.

Actually, *pneuma*, *pneumatikos*. And then we have *pneumatikos*. We have an adjective and a noun.

And the problem is, the second one can be either masculine or neuter. Is it people, or is it words or things? Most come down on the words side, surely, in the commentaries. I can't unpack all of this to you in this kind of video setting.

I can only encourage you to do your homework. Go to this array of commentaries that I've mentioned to see how they do it. When you do, your heads will spin.

And you will shake your head. And you'll read it three or four times, and it'll begin to make a little more sense. But maybe with what we've talked about here, you'll be able to read those commentaries a little bit better.

What's the bottom line? The bottom line is this. The Spirit of God took the apostles and used them as vehicles from which the truth and words of God could be channeled into what we call the scriptures or the text. That's the assertion.

That's the majority opinion, I think, of the assertion. So, you can accept the assertion, but when you try to put it into a test tube and explain it, you have now removed yourself from the human arena. And you're trying to unpack the divine arena.

And that usually does not go anywhere. It's a miracle of God in that regard. It's not pure dictation.

It's not being in a trance, necessarily. There are all kinds of ways through the Bible that God did this. But in the epistles, it seems to be a conscious work of the apostles from a base of information and knowledge that they had, that God protected them in that interpretation so that they could correctly communicate it to their audiences and produce things like the epistles that we can take to the bank.

They're accurate. They're adequate. And upon them, we can build the truth that we need for the running of our lives.

Amazing, isn't it? Like I said, this is a loaded text, a loaded passage. And we're just hitting the highlights for you. The third aspect in verses 14 to 16, Paul delineates the application of spiritual truth.

We have the origination of spiritual truth in Revelation and in that unique process of the Spirit using the apostolic community and the writers of the Bible to bring us those words. But now we've got the application of it. In verses 14 to 16, once again, 2011 NIV, the person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness and cannot understand them because they are discerned only in a spiritual way through the Spirit, it says.

The person with the Spirit makes judgments about all things. Well, we'll talk about that. But such a person is not subject to merely human judgments.

For who has known the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him? We have the mind of Christ, Paul says. The "we" being that community, we, you and me, in the extension of that community, we have the mind of God right here. We have the mind of Christ in terms of what the apostles gave us.

Now, it's to God's glory that we try to unpack it and live by it. There are no shortcuts. There are no esoteric secrets.

There are no inspired commentaries or even inspired preachers in the biblical sense. We've got the risk and the struggle of unpacking the scriptures and being obedient to their teaching as best we can. And in doing that, we are exercising ourselves as being created in the image of God.

And by so doing, we glorify God. We may not have it all right at the end of the day, but I think that God's going to look at us a bit more from the standpoint of whether you pursued it. Or did you take the easy route? Did you take the social cultural route? You had a good time, but you never advanced yourself in the understanding

of God and his ways. And if that doesn't happen, you have nothing to take with you to stand before the throne of God.

So, Paul delineates the application. Let's look at this. Okay.

So, in verse 14, the person without the spirit does not accept the things that come from the spirit of God but considers them foolishness and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the spirit. The person with the Spirit makes judgments about all things here. All right.

First of all, 1C on page 60, the unregenerate person, or, here are two interpretations of this person. Is it an unregenerate person? Some say that. Or is it resistant to the apostles' Christian faith? Both of these are true.

What is it in this specific context? Fitzmeyer may be a little more onto it in this specific context, resistant to apostle Christians. In other words, those Corinthian believers who had social status and social processes of teacher and disciples as being more prominent than the teaching of the apostles were resistant to the apostolic teaching. Consequently, Paul has to ring the changes on that and say, look, you're not rejecting me.

You're rejecting God because God gave the apostolic community this information. Resistant to apostle Christians, a Christian does not have the independent capacity. Now, let me say that.

It does not have the independent capacity to correctly signify spiritual truth. Now that is a big mouthful, and I need to explain it. What do I mean? Independent capacity to correctly signify spiritual truth.

This comes up in verse 15 as well, when it talks about how the regenerate person has the capacity to signify spiritual truth. Having the capacity to do something is two different things. The unregenerate person or the resistant to apostolic teaching doesn't have the independent capacity to correctly signify spiritual truth.

They have to submit to the teaching in order to be taught by it. But there is an abyss that has been created, particularly out of 2:15, that the unspiritual person doesn't know. What does that mean? Well, I want to talk to you about that a little bit.

I'm not going to tell you who this article was by, but I have an article here that was written quite a while back, in the mid-80s, by a very, very prominent preacher who has become exceedingly more prominent. A preacher of much worth, actually. How to study the Bible.

This was published in a Christian youth magazine. And the article starts off this way. Can anyone study and understand the Bible? Let me say it again.

Can anyone? That would mean unbeliever, believer, and so forth. Anybody. Can anybody study and understand the Bible? And then in no uncertain terms, in almost capital letters, the writer says, no, they can't.

Not just anybody. He also uses 1 Corinthians 2:14 as proof of this. Now, to understand the Bible, you have to be a believer.

He says that as he goes on, now that means you can't discover God's truth in his word through the academic process or through the empirical process. You can't just study the Bible and know what it means. Now, I wish I didn't know how much I've been able to communicate to you so far, something about the nature of God's revelation to us.

But this article has opened a can of worms, which basically undermines the very Bible that this brother is extremely committed to. And he doesn't even know he did it. Let me ask you, does this Bible have meaning in and of itself? Or does it only have meaning when I read it? Does this Bible contain history and language and stories and epistles and all these things that could stand on its own? Or do I have to unpack it for you? To put it another way this, are we Bible-centered, or are we reader-centered? This person has created, unknown to himself, a reader-centered approach to scripture.

And basically, would say that the Bible is meaningless unless you're a Christian reader. Well, I want to tell you that that's just plain dumb. Let me tell you why.

Just one illustration. I attend, or I did while I was a full-time faculty member. I'm retired now.

I have to pay my own way to things now. I don't get an expense account, and it's pretty expensive, so I don't get to enjoy my professional meetings like I used to. But I would go to the annual meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature.

It was sort of a trio of meetings: the Evangelical Theological Society, the Institute of Biblical Research, and then the Society of Biblical Literature. It's at least a seven-day-long stretch where these societies get together. And there's an ascending aspect in some ways to the technicality of these meetings.

The ETS and the IBR are made up mostly of those who recognize the authority and respect the scriptures as scripture. The SBL is a mixed bag. The Society of Biblical Literature generally represents all of the university programs in the world, not just America, but in the world, that teach the Bible.

Did you know that almost every major university has a religion department, and they actually teach Bible? They teach the languages, they teach the history, they teach the archaeology, they teach the geography, they teach books, and so forth. Every major university in the world, particularly in the U.S. and in Britain, has a department that does that. Some of them are rather famous.

Harvard, Yale, Dartmouth, and on and on it could go. I would go, and I would listen to papers. I would buy books.

That's one of the main reasons I went. At the SBL program, there might be four or five gymnasium floors of publishers with all of their books. These are all books about religion, but particularly books about the unpacking of the Bible.

Great variety, obviously. And I would go to seminars and listen to some of the authors of books that I'd use. I have behind me lexicons of Greek and Hebrew, dictionaries, and encyclopedias published by the individuals who make up these societies, ETS, IBR, and SPL.

And I could go and listen to a person, and I'm thinking of several right now who could do one marvelous job of telling me what the Bible means. Whether it's Old or New Testament, it makes no difference. They would unpack that text and they would tell me what the author intended to say.

With great expertise in the original languages and with all the issues of interpretation taken into consideration. And you just sit there and say, wow, wish I could read that deeply. The problem was this.

They didn't always believe it. They could tell you what it meant better than I can. But they didn't always believe it.

They had the capacity to learn the languages, understand historical and cultural backgrounds, and bring them to bear upon context. They could accurately lay out in great detail, and they have done so in millions of commentaries. But when it comes to the issue of believing, that's another thing.

They're kind of like a teacher of literature who just loves what they do. They teach the literature, and they love it. They dedicate themselves far beyond many conservative Bible teachers that I know.

And they've achieved a great deal more than most of us. But at the end of the day, it didn't change their mind. It didn't change their worldview about how they live their lives.

You'll say, how can that be? Well, it can be. Why? Because the Bible is not reader-centered. It is Bible-centered.

Its meaning is objective. It's here. It can be had by anybody who's willing to pay their dues to learn it.

But even knowing it doesn't mean that you're going to obey it or adopt it as your philosophy of life. To them, it was a job that was challenging in many ways. For us, it was a rewarding job because it gave us libraries of great information, of intense decades of study to produce works that told us about language and history, and unpacked the lands and the times of the Bible so that we could go in and understand what these writers were saying.

The difference between them and us is that we believe it, and maybe they don't. But the Word is still the Word. They don't undermine the Bible by studying it.

They only undermine those who would ask them, well, should we live by it? And they'd say, well, it's just a religion. It's a history of religion. For us, it's more than a history of religion.

It is an authoritative Scripture, an authoritative Word of God to be obeyed at all costs. So, when this writer said that a person can't understand the Bible, the writer unknowingly undermined the objective nature of Scripture and opened a door that undermines the whole Bible itself. Didn't even know it.

That person would faint if they understood how wrong they were about this issue. If the Bible does not mean it is not objective in its teaching and is not knowable, then it is a mystical book, not a real book. The Bible certainly has mystery, but there's a difference between having mystery and being mystical.

Those are some pretty deep worldview thoughts for you. I probably never heard them before. But you need to think deeply about this.

And you need to realize that there are people in this world, oddly enough, who know a whole lot more about the Bible than many of us. And yet, they haven't accepted it as the rule of their life. Hopefully, we've accepted it as the rule of our life.

Do we take it seriously? The people I'm talking about sacrifice their entire lives to study the Scripture just because it's the Scripture. Isn't that interesting? And here we are, believers of it, and we're looking for shortcuts. We're looking for emotional highs rather than understanding.

Sing more, preach less. Well, you make the judgment. I've made mine.

I'm sorry to reveal it to you, eh? Not really. Sorry. The unregenerate person or the resistant to apostles Christian, now you should understand, don't have the independent capacity to correctly signify, explain spiritual truth.

They can know what it says, but to really get it requires another level. We summarize that many times by talking about conversion, where the Spirit of God sustains a real relationship with us, and in ways that are not explicable, helps us, not by giving us content. It's sometimes not explainable how the Spirit of God helps us.

But the Spirit of God's role is not to overcome your laziness and your lack of diligence. The Spirit of God's role is to help you in the process of your work in terms of understanding the Bible. Pneumonikon is used six times in the New Testament.

That's that word for spiritual there. In the neuter. But there are a number of times that the adjective pneumatikos is used.

The reason I'm faltering here a little bit is that I think I need to clarify that particular note in your notes. You can look up pneumatikos, the adjective, in a concordance, or you could look it up in an art in Gingrich, or BDAG, they call it, Bauer, Arndt, Gingrich, Danker lexicon, and see how many times it's used. What does it mean to be spiritual could be a question here.

Well, in this context, I think it means to rightly signify the truth that God has revealed. Spirituality in Scripture is tied to the text. Spirituality is judged by our alignment with the text.

Spirituality is not some status. The Corinthians missed that. Spirituality has to do with our alignment with God's ethics, our alignment with his teaching, and living according to that.

That's the judgment upon which spirituality is made. In relation to the quality of a person, who is spiritual? There are only four texts in the whole Bible answering who is spiritual. Three of them are in 1 Corinthians.

1 Corinthians 2:15, and some of these have interpretive issues. 2:15, 3:1, notice brothers and sisters, I could not address you as people who live by the Spirit as the NIV, but the formal equivalent translation is you who are spiritual, meaning acting in a spiritual way. 14:37 and 38, we'll look at later, and then Galatians 6:1 says, after the fruit of the Spirit text, that you who are spiritual help a person who is struggling.

What does it mean to be spiritual? It's not an emotive thing. What is your alignment with the teaching of the Bible? You see, you could be spiritual in one area and worldly in another. It's not that you're all spiritual or all worldly.

You are more like this. You have your strengths, and you have your weaknesses. That's why we have community.

The church is a community, and in the church, you have people who are spiritual in certain areas and weak in other areas. The spiritual helps the weak, but the weak are strong in certain areas that these other people may be weak. So as a community, we assist each other and move each other along in our understanding of God and His Word, in obeying Him, and in fulfilling the Great Commission, for example.

We are a community. The second thing is that the regenerated person has the capacity to signify spiritual truth. He that is spiritual, that's a quote from the old King James.

You saw that it was translated differently in NIV. But the regenerate person has the capacity not only to find it and understand it, but to get the point. But the Corinthians were missing getting the point because even though they heard it, they warped it through their own social context and their own social mores of this competitiveness particularly.

They messed it up. Paul's concluding affirmation is in verse 16. He affirms the nature of divine wisdom by quoting Isaiah 40:13. And you can see it in your Bible.

If you've got a NIV, it's put off into poetic verse. For who has known the mind of the Lord? By the way, what's the answer to that? Who has known the mind of the Lord so as to instruct Him? What's the answer? The answer is nobody. We do not, just because we're Christians, have the mind of God.

We do not, just because we're Christians, have the answers to everything. If you remember Star Wars, and I'm using a metaphor here that may not be known to everybody, but the movie Star Wars had Captain Kirk, and it had Spock. Spock was the guy with the pointed ears.

He was from, and he was a Vulcan from a certain planet. And you remember that Spock could do the mind meld. He could put his hands on your head and read your mind.

Just to use maybe a bad illustration. But becoming a Christian doesn't mean that God does a Vulcan transfer for you. He puts his hand on your head and pumps everything in there like an upgrade to your computer.

You get an upgrade to your computer in conversion, but there's software that you obtain as you go along. He gave you the initial package, but now you're going to have to pay some dues for the rest of it, just like when you buy computer packaging in our current world.

Who has known the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him? The Isaianic answer is nobody. But then notice verse, the end of the verse, but we have the mind of Christ. On what basis, Paul? Revelation.

That's the basis of having the mind of Christ. I don't know God's mind because I sit here and grunt or because I have an emotional devotional, or I think sweet thoughts about God, or I pray and tell God, show me. I have the mind of God because I have the scriptures.

The rest of it is something that I'm responsible for. I can't just do this. Now I have the mind of God, and I can tell you everything you need to know immediately, accurately, thoroughly, and authoritatively.

No, it's not it. This has to go in and be processed to be able to give you sound advice, just like you have to do with everyone else. So, at the end of the day, just how important is the scripture? The Bible as a whole, both Old and New Testament.

It's the big story. It is a privilege that we have to have this book. And it's our responsibility to bring it to life in the sense of making it relevant in our lives and in the lives of the people that we teach and lead.

That's pretty major, isn't it? It's pretty awesome to have that responsibility. But it's a lot of work. I will not sell you a bill of goods, whether you like it or whether you don't.

You have a lot of work to do. If you're lazy, if you don't really want to put in the effort to know God's word, do yourself a favor. Do the church a favor.

Go sell used cars. Don't be a minister. We've got enough lazy ones already.

We want men and women who will do their homework so that they can teach others. Just as Paul said in Timothy, I've taught you, you teach others, so they'll be able to teach others also. The continuation of that line of teaching requires a major, major commitment. And the Bible is especially a work of the mind.

You have got to think, and you've got to have something to think about. You've got to put something in to get something out. So, I trust that as you think upon this passage and read about this passage, you'll come to the conclusion that yes, you want to commit yourself to that kind of a career, to that kind of calling to be a teacher in the church.

Pretty big, pretty awesome, pretty responsible. And God help us all as we endeavor to do what we've been called to do. Have a good day.

This is Dr. Gary Meadors in his teaching on the book of 1 Corinthians. This is lecture 13, Paul's Response to the Oral Communique from Chloe's Household, 1 Corinthians 3 and 4.