

Dr. Gary Meadors, 1 Corinthians, Lecture 11, Paul's Response to the Oral Communique from Chloe's Household, Part 2, 1 Cor. 1:1-2:5

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This is Dr. Gary Meadors in his teaching on the book of 1 Corinthians. This is lecture 11, Paul's Response to the Oral Communique from Chloe's Household, chapter 1, verse 1 through chapter 2, verse 5.

Well, thank you for coming back. We're continuing with our talk about 1 Corinthians, chapters 1 through 4. In the video lecture number 10, just before this one, which is number 11, still with notes packed number 7, I introduced you to the underlying currents of Roman Corinth in relation to this whole idea of the teacher and the student, the fact of the orators who were a major part of Roman city's concourse, its legal system, this whole issue of status and dignity, the capturing of it or the loss of it, and that all that was underneath this issue of the divisions within Corinth. As 1 Corinthians 3:3 says, they were acting in a secular fashion, a secular mindset, to be more specific, which is extremely important because everything we do is a product of the way we think.

The Bible says in Proverbs that as a person thinks, so are they. Jesus said, out of the heart, which is the mind, come the issues of life. In the Bible, the heart is here as a rational process, not as an emotional process.

Our culture puts the heart in an emotional domain, but the Bible doesn't. The heart has to do with the rational process, by and large. To believe in the Lord Jesus Christ with all your heart doesn't mean to have an emotional experience with Jesus.

It means to think about his claims on your life and to submit to those claims, own those claims, and confess those claims. It's a mental process. That's a very important concept to get a hold of in the Bible is the meaning of the term heart in Scripture.

So, I gave you that background. We talked about a number of issues. Now I want to flow through the text on page 55 of Notepad 7. I call it a traditional outline.

It's sort of a paragraph-by-paragraph flowing through the text. We've seen Talbert's chiasmic outline, where he starts with the three questions, and then they are answered in the reverse order. That outline is a legitimate picture of a structure that still puts things pretty much like I have them, with chapter 2 being very crucial right in the center of this.

But I want to bring a little different logic to the flow of these paragraphs. Maybe not so much a different logic, but a logic that I see in how Paul is communicating with the Corinthians here. All right, so notice that in our traditional outline, we start with Paul stating the problem of division, which Chloé's household reported as existing in the Corinthian church.

Now remember, these divisions come under this whole idea. As you've been reading this text, you're acting worldly. You're acting in the flesh. That's just another metaphor for being worldly.

Consequently, the divisions are a result of following the world view of Roman Corinth and understanding life and how to live, then following the Christian view. It's a church divided. They're divided over the human messengers.

Some are of Paul; some are of Apollos, as our text talks about in verses 10 through 17. But please hang on to the idea that the competitiveness between teachers is a part of the way that Roman culture operated. First of all, there's an appeal for unity because of this problem of competitiveness, this problem of division.

The Bible says in 1:10, I appeal to you, brethren, sisters, by the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you be in agreement and that there may be no divisions among you, but that you may be united in the same mind. Please note that in the same mind and the same purpose.

You see, my friends, unity is first a mental unity, not a party unity, an emotional unity. It's a unity that means that we are thinking the same way, that we describe reality in the same manner, and that we have the same views and the same ethics. I don't think that it is so much a unity in an absolute sense.

That's impossible in the human arena. It's unity and diversity. Unity is the ability to deal with diversity, but diversity cannot stray too far from the central core understandings that the apostles have laid down.

It's noteworthy that Paul's appeal, when he appeals to them very strongly, calls them brothers and sisters. Paul's appeal to the family. He's appealing to them as friends, if you please, not the apostle to these underlings.

He's part of them. Fitzmeyer calls this letter, or at least this piece of it, a Hellenistic letter of admonition, and he does that on the basis of the word appeal. An appeal is an admonition.

I admonish you, some of the older versions would say. This is a nouthetic thing. The word nouthetic comes from a Greek word that means to exhort, to appeal, to beseech.

That's the kind of letter. He illustrates this by saying that Paul was saying to them, you are a Christian; act like a Christian. Get your actions in line with your thinking.

This is the way the Bible always comes at it. It's not think slash do, it's think hyphen do. They always go together.

Epistemology and axiology. Epistemology is the sources and the nature and validity of knowledge. Axiology has to do with the ethics involved.

Thinking, doing. You do because you think a certain way. It's not doing, then thinking.

It's thinking, then doing. Have you ever wondered if all of Paul's epistles are laid out with theology and ethics? Have you ever noticed if it's 6 chapters, 3 chapters are sort of theological foundations, then the last 3 chapters will be exhortations and behavioral issues.

If it's 12 chapters, 6 / 6. If it's 14, 7 / 7. It's almost religiously laid out that way. It has to do with thinking and acting. The Bible is always that way, and it never bifurcates.

I'll use that word again. It never separates thinking and action. Action is the natural product of the way we think, as a person thinks, the Bible says.

So are we. And so, consequently, we've got to reverse some of our thinking about being Christian. Many times, Christianity is put on an emotional basis.

Christianity is, by the Bible, a rational basis, not an emotional basis. Emotions are a product. They are never a cause.

They are never the focus. They are a product of other things. Hopefully, we have emotions in our lives.

But the fact is, if we don't think straight, we will not live straight. Be transformed by the renewing of your mind so that you may demonstrate God's revealed will. It's not the renewing of your emotions and other things.

If we don't think right, we will not act right. And we'll have no basis for our actions anyway. Now, at this particular point, if you were reading along in a commentary, because Fitzmeyer brings up this letter of admonition, which is what's known as a rhetorical device, he, at that point in his commentary on pages 66 and 67, gives a list of rhetorical devices that are used in the book of 1 Corinthians.

That's pretty important because in this appeal genre, which is very much a part of Corinthians, we have rhetorical devices that a writer uses to get the attention of the

audience. Remember, these things were read to people. Their ears were the first to respond to the words.

And those words are used very much in that regard. Listen to what I have to say to you. Oh, perk up.

That's a rhetorical issue in an oral culture. So, he gives it at this point. So, at this point, I'm going to introduce you to something that is very much a part of 1 Corinthians.

And yet, we're not dealing with a slogan, for example, in this particular text, but we are dealing with this issue of rhetorical devices. One of the largest rhetorical devices in the book of 1 Corinthians is what's known as slogans. Now, notice at the bottom of page 55, an interesting feature of 1 Corinthians is the presence of slogans.

What is a slogan? Paul takes the dictums, the sayings of the Corinthians from that interchange. He quotes that saying, and then he responds to it with clarification and correction if necessary. So, within this book, we're going to see a number of places where a context is introduced with a quotation.

And that quotation may very well be, and as you study commentaries, you can ferret this out, may very well be what the Corinthians would have said, not what Paul was saying. And then Paul comes back and corrects them. All things are lawful was a slogan that they would have thrown in Paul's face.

Paul uses that four times. And he comes back and says, but not all things da-da-da-da-da-da. Consequently, be aware of this issue of slogans; commentaries will point it out to you.

I want to give you a little picture of it here. Paul says what they say, then declares how it should be understood or perhaps corrected. Fitzmeyer identifies the following slogans, and I've given you the list here in the notes for your convenience.

Before I move on from there, as with everything, there are some who would look at things differently. Margaret Mitchell is a fine scholar, and she is quoted by Garland, if you happen to be reading that commentary. She calls these things that we're calling slogans impersonation rhetoric.

Paul's impersonating them and then responding. So that would raise the question, is that exactly what they said, or is that what Paul is saying they said and then responds? Frankly, I don't really care which way you want to take it. If we're understanding scripture to be authoritative, it comes out the same way.

So, I'm going to call them slogans, but I think Margaret Mitchell is a fine New Testament scholar. I highly recommend any work that she's provided for you, and she's done works on Corinthians. So, let's look now at them.

You'll notice that I've given you a chart; unfortunately, the pagination is. Page 55 at the bottom has ASV and NIV. The next page gives you the chart on page 56.

The ASV is the left column, and the NIV is the right column. For example, one of the early slogans is in 6:12, all things are lawful. The NIV translates it: I have the right to do anything.

Okay, that's an equivalent understanding of all things that are lawful for me. It is not too far off base, but you can see the formal translation and the functional or dynamic translation. 6:13, meats for the belly and belly for meats, but God shall bring to naught both it and them.

By putting that in the list, Fitzmeyer is claiming that's a slogan. That's something they would have thrown in Paul's face. The NIV says food for the stomach and the stomach for food.

God will destroy them both pretty close. 8:1, we know that we all have knowledge. Something they would have said is that we all possess knowledge, which is almost the same thing.

In 8, Paul will respond to that. 8-4, no idol is anything in the world. There is no God but one.

The NIV is very close. 8:5, there are God's many and Lord's many. Very close again on the translations.

All things are lawful. 10:23, here we're coming back to that which we saw up in 6:12. All things are lawful, and they use the same translation; I have the right to do anything.

Chapter 15, there is no resurrection of the dead. That's interesting because that's what they would say. That's one of the problems Paul was addressing, and he comes back and addresses it for them.

Possibly, here's some possibilities, not taken by Fitzmeyer, but thrown into the mix. I am of Paul, I am of Apollos, I follow so and so. Maybe they were saying that, and Paul would come in and quote them.

It's a possibility, but it's not the same sort of thing. It's more descriptive in chapter 1 where we have these personalities being put forward. Whereas in the other context,

the context is almost boundaried by the slogan because then it becomes the controversial statement that is going to be analyzed.

7:1, I think, is a slogan. It's good for a man not to touch a woman. In the NIV, it is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman.

That's NIV 2011. This is getting more into the context; the original NIV said it's good for a man not to marry. That was an absolutely horrible translation of that passage.

The new NIV got that straightened out. 8-8, but food will not commend us to God, neither if we eat, nor if we do not eat, nor are we the worst. That formal language is doobie doobie, do remember.

Are we the worst, nor if we eat, are we the better? Smoothed out by the NIV, but food does not bring us near to God. We are no worse if we do not eat and no better if we do.

And so there again, it's part of the rhetoric, part of the rhetorical nature of what's going on between Paul and his audience. And some others are mentioned, probably chapter 14, that we mentioned in our introduction about the issue of I suffer not a woman to participate in chapter 14. We'll get to that again, but we got to it in the introduction.

So those are rhetorical devices that you can easily read over in the Bible. And that's just a small portion of rhetorical devices. In chapter 4, we're going to talk about the rhetorical device of sarcasm.

At the end of the chapter, Paul almost humorously tells the Corinthians what he thinks about them. And if you were to read it seriously, you'd be taking it completely in the wrong way. So, it's an appeal letter, and slogans are a part of beseeching, appealing, and arguing, which could be part of that literary genre.

The report in verses 11 and 12. The report, as it says, for it has been reported by Chloe's household that there are these divisions. And here we get Paul, Cephas, Paulus, Christ, and so forth.

We've already heard that, as explained in 3:3, you're thinking in a secular fashion. We now understand that when you read 1 Corinthians talks about this rivalry of people, it relates to the competitiveness of teachers and disciples. And so, you got the disciples of Apollos, and you got the disciples of Peter, you got the disciples of Paul, and then you got these who think they're really pious, and they're the disciples of Christ.

And they're all kind of vying with each other for status. And Paul is saying you're all wrong because you've got this backward. It's not competitiveness.

We are all one in Christ, and we need to get together, not be separated. All right, so the report. So, in verses 13 and following, let me look at the top of page 57 very quickly here.

Notice the comment. Remember that it seems the Corinthians view Apollos as powerful. That was his oratory.

He evidently was a very interesting person. Some people have even said he wrote Hebrews because the book of Hebrews is so sophisticated and flowery in certain ways. Apollos' physical presence was lacking according to 2 Corinthians 10.10, and yet he had strong oratory.

He was quite a persuader. And these are, again, cultural measurements of oratorical skill and correctness. The Corinthians were using the wrong measures.

They were going with who was impressive. I've seen this happen in ministry on occasion, where you get personalities involved. Some people are just slick, and that's a metaphor that they just seem to be able to speak, and everybody just says, oh, my, how wonderful that is.

Maybe they're tall and handsome or beautiful, and they have an overpowering personality, and they have a way with words. They can tell a lot of stories and keep you entertained, and you're just wild by all that. Well, you have to be careful about that.

Paul was perhaps an ugly dude. Remember, he was stoned at Lystra early in his ministry. When people throw stones, they don't throw them at your feet.

They throw them at your head. More than likely, he bore the scars of that. I think that that has something to do with his thorn in the flesh.

There are some who talk about his eyesight being bad. Well, that could be the result of stoning as well. Some say that Paul was short and bald.

This goes back into the history of things. We don't have any authoritative text on that. He wasn't an impressive dude until he spoke, until he wrote, and wow, who is this guy? My life verses in 2 Peter 3. Peter said, Paul writes some things that are hard to understand, and the unlearned go wrong wrestling with Paul's statements.

That's a paraphrase of that statement in Peter. Now, if the apostle Peter had to say that Paul wrote some things that are hard to understand when he spoke the language Paul spoke, he knew Paul. He conversed with Paul.

He lived in the same context as Paul. Here we are 2,000 years removed, and we think we're so smart. If Peter struggled, you better believe that we're going to struggle as well.

It's not self-evident many times. When the details are probed in light of the oratory culture, the behavior of the Corinthians is then understood as worldly. So, worldly, when we find it in the translation of 1 Corinthians, you have to separate yourself from worldly today.

You know, I don't know what your cultural mores are in your Christian communities. In certain parts of America, people thought it was worldly if a woman wore too much makeup or wore too much jewelry. People thought it was worldly if a man dressed in some very expensive way, being opulent with gold rings and maybe a gold necklace and things like that.

We've got all these cultural mores, and we tend to attach the word worldly to that. But that's not what the Bible is doing. The Bible is using worldly to talk about the way you think.

You're thinking like the world. So, be careful when you come across the word world in these early chapters. By the way, we haven't mentioned it yet, but the word wisdom is used 21 times in chapters 1 to 4, hardly used in the rest of the book.

21 times. But the word wisdom means something different in different places. There's worldly wise, which means smart about how the world operates.

There's the wisdom of the world that goes along with that. There is the wisdom of God, which would be good wisdom. And then there is wisdom, which is acting like the world.

You've got the wisdom of the world. And so, 21 times. Repetition is a door into meaning.

There's something going on about that wisdom, and it's not always good. You need the wisdom of God, not the wisdom of the world. You need to think about God's thoughts, not mimic the way you were raised to think in our current cultural setting.

Does a fish feel wet? No, it doesn't. Does a person feel their culture? No. So, don't you assume for one moment that you're thinking right just because you thought the thought.

You have got to probe. You have to understand what is influencing you, so you can get in touch about how you ought to feel wet in terms of your culture. In verses 13 to 17, there's a rhetorical evaluation of the problems of divisions.

And here's where we have those rhetorical questions, which Paul then goes on to answer in the book according to the way that Talbert has laid this out for you. So, we've got a church divided, and in these first 17 verses, divided over these human messengers and how these human messengers have messed with the message: messengers and message.

There's a quote here from Leon Morris, a fine Bible scholar from Australia. Listen to it, and you can read it on your own as well. Some, at least of the Corinthians, were setting too high a value on human wisdom and human eloquence in line with the typical Greek admiration for rhetoric and philosophical studies.

In the fact of this, Paul insists that preaching with wisdom of words was no part of his commission. But remember class; it's the wisdom of words in the context of Roman Corinth, which means doing it their way. This is not saying anything against speaking well.

It's not saying anything against speaking intelligently. It's not saying anything about using good vocabulary. You don't have to be a careless speaker to please God.

You've got to be a good speaker, but you don't speak like the world in terms of its meaning. But you can be an absolutely wonderful speaker, an influential speaker, an impressive speaker, speaking God's truth rather than just entertaining people with the gimmicks of the world, like a comedian who's standing up and telling jokes. I'm afraid I've seen a few too many pulpits like that.

So, he says, with wisdom of words, that wasn't part of his commission. That kind of preaching would draw men to the preacher. It would nullify the cross of Christ.

The faithful preaching of the cross results in men ceasing to put their trust in human devices and relying rather on God's work in Christ. Reliance on rhetoric would cause men to trust in men, the very antithesis of what the preaching of the cross is meant to affect. And yet Paul will use some really sophisticated rhetoric.

Paul will use words to get people's attention. The end of chapter four would be one great illustration of that. So, it's not speaking in and of itself.

It's speaking from what platform? A platform of secular wisdom, a platform of speaking in that context, or a platform of speaking God's word. And I'll tell you, it's

the message that's offensive, not the manner of the message. It's the message itself that is that way.

Being a foolish speaker doesn't please God. What pleases God is preaching the gospel, which those who only have a secular mindset will view as foolishness. More and more so is this true.

Notice Roman, or notice B. Paul evaluates the problem of division with Chloe's household, reported as existing in the Corinthian church, verses 18 through the end, nearly the end of chapter four. Now, once again, division is driven by competition. Division is driven by a false loyalty to a teacher, even a good one, but doing it in the wrong way.

Paul evaluates the problem of division by an appeal to the nature of the gospel. So, they're not only divided over human messengers, and they're divided over the message itself. They see the cross as not quite up to their rhetorical standards.

It's an embarrassment. But to talk about being saved by the blood and sacrifice, and the reason that is, is because it isolates it from the biblical metaphor. The biblical metaphor goes back to the Old Testament, and the message and the metaphor were created in a situation where animal sacrifices were the picture of that kind of redemption.

Then Jesus becomes the ultimate sacrifice. That's not an afterthought. That is the fulfillment of the metaphor that was started way, way back within the scriptures themselves and then became a part of the first century.

But by the time it came to fruition with Jesus being crucified, the whole idea of crucifixion and human sacrifice had become something that was in the past, not in the present. And as a result of that, it was embarrassing. And that didn't fit worldly wisdom, secular wisdom, and the Corinthians were feeling that sting, and they were trying to nullify it in a variety of ways.

Pseudo-human wisdom fails to understand the message of the cross. This is tough. It depends on what kind of world you live in.

I've grown up in the United States. I've traveled internationally, but my main cultural existence has been within the U.S. I was born in the 40s. I was a post-World War II baby.

As a result of, I grew up in America and, for probably in the range of 30 to 40 years, had a strong acceptance of a Judeo-Christian ethic, Judeo-Christian values, and nobody really argued that very much. Oh, in a few places, they would. But culturally and across the board, people identified with and recognized those values.

That's not true any longer. Today, our American culture is dominated by values that are not so much drawn from Judeo-Christian thinking. There may be some residual pieces, but in our culture, when we think of politicians, what do we think of? We think of liars.

We think of manipulators. That's awful, isn't it? The people that run our country in America are supposed to be looking out for our interests. Some of them may be, but we're seeing them constantly caught in lies and greed and behavior that's not acceptable.

If the founding fathers were to walk into Washington, D.C. today, they'd be like Jesus walking into the temple. They'd have whips in their hands, and they'd drive out the money changers that have corrupted the system. It's a sad state of affairs, and I hope in some way that this nation can find its way before it gives up on the things that have made it to be a great nation in the world.

We have our sins to be sure, plenty of them, and yet at the same time, go live somewhere else for a while in terms of some of the struggling countries in this world and see the poverty, see the ethnic hate to the point of violence and ethnic cleansing, the war, not just rumors of it, not just an occasional terrorist act, but a culture of war. It's a sad thing. Our world needs the grace of God in the deepest ways.

So, there's a rhetorical evaluation of this problem that Paul was thinking about in these divisions: pseudo-human wisdom and human pride in 26 to 31. You can read this yourself because I think these texts are to be heard, and there is a power in the hearing of them.

I would suggest that in the midst of these lectures, you sit down in a room by yourself without anyone else around and, read it out loud and listen to it. I'm not just going to take our time on this video and read these things to you. I'll read some of it, but the fact is that we need to hear these texts.

I'm going to read 26 to 31. Chapter one, verse 26. I'm reading from the NRSV.

Consider your own call, brothers and sisters. Not many of you were wise by human standards. There's that secular wisdom again.

Not many were powerful. You didn't have status. Not many were of noble birth, but God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise.

Now, be careful how you explain that. That doesn't mean that you put value on foolishness, but it means that by the canons of the world, you're not much. You don't have power.

You don't walk into Congress, the Senate, or the White House, and people scurry to see you and listen to you. That's worldly power. You don't have that.

Most of us don't have that. Very few do, and the ones who have it need to learn how to use it. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise.

God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong. I can think of the possible context of Christian martyrs. We live in an age where there are more Christian martyrs than at any other time in history.

We don't hear much about it in Africa, in the Middle East, in various parts of our world. Christians are dying for their faith, and even at the moment of their death, they give testimony to Jesus, and people laugh. They're laughing condemnation down upon their head.

The weak have become strong. God chose what is low and despised in the world, things that are not to reduce the nothing things that are. Now, as you listen to this, think status, status, status.

What drives the Corinthian Roman Corinth? Status in the minds of many of these early Christians. And Paul is saying, wait a minute. Status is what drives a Christian worldview.

So, that no one might boast in the presence of God, set those things aside. He is the source of your life in Christ, who became for us wisdom from God.

And he was crucified. And righteousness and sanctification and redemption, in order that as it is written, let the one who boasts boast in the Lord. Are you starting to get a feel for these first four chapters? Well, that was read out loud in that congregation.

People should have wept. They should have thought about the sacrifice of Christ on the cross and said, here I am, running around trying to be a big shot and denying Jesus in the process. How easy that is to do in many contexts of our lives.

So, Paul evaluates this problem. He evaluates it by an appeal to the nature of the gospel. The gospel should humble us, not make us feel some false sense of exaltation.

So, he calls them to remember page 58. He describes their past. You weren't hot shots.

And he talks about the present. Boast in God. Don't boast in Paul or Peter or even Christ, but boast in the fact that God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, which probably hadn't been written yet, even though it was true.

Furthermore, in chapter two, verses one to five, we see him talk about the fact that we're divided over the message. And that division made them create a Paul of their own thinking, actually, not a Paul that he wants to be thought of. Paul's personal example in chapter two, verses one to five, demonstrates the wisdom and power of God.

How was Paul's example in contrast to Winter's description of public speakers of the era? Public speakers of the era, the orators that would have come into Corinth, would have come in dressed in a certain way, carrying themselves in a certain way. And the disciples would have been coming, bringing them gifts, bowing to them in certain aspects of homage, and exalting them. That's not how Paul came.

Want to hear it? Good to hear. Chapter two, verse one. When I came to you, brothers and sisters, I did not come proclaiming the mystery of God to you in lofty words of wisdom.

Now, once again, don't enculturate that and say boy, I can't speak well because if I speak well, I'll be violating this, and I'll be using words of wisdom. No, that's not what it's talking about. When it says he didn't do it in lofty words of wisdom, he didn't do it in a secular manner that would have impressed them.

He did it with wisdom, God's wisdom. He did it in a lofty way, with a good vocabulary and strong speech, but it wasn't the speech they wanted to hear. For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.

That is not a promotion of ignorance. It's a promotion of the fact that Paul is focused on God's message, not on all the trappings that the world would bring. And I came to you in weakness and in fear and much trembling.

There are some who point out that Paul came to Corinth immediately after his visit to Athens. They will say that Paul got beat up at Athens because he tried to speak to the Athenians like a philosopher. And he got so beat up when he got to Corinth, he says, I'm giving up that stuff.

I'm not going to try to do that again. I'm just going to preach Christ crucified. Frankly, I don't know the origin of that kind of explanation, but to put it in the best way I can, that's hogwash.

That's baloney. Whatever you use in your own setting to talk about, that's crazy. That's not what these words mean.

Paul did not lose at Athens. Paul won. Look at the converts.

There was an Areopagite converted. That was a leader of Athens. Oh yeah, they didn't want to listen anymore.

They just heard him as another voice among many voices. They didn't all bow down to Paul, but several people did. I tell you, if I went to the University of Chicago or Hong Kong or someplace in this world that is a secular nest of education and preached a simple gospel message and got run out, but one or two people came up to me afterward and said, we want to hear more about Jesus.

Would I feel like a failure? You bet not. I'd be absolutely elated. When Paul said, I came to you in weakness and fear and in much trembling, that's not a commentary on Athens.

That's a commentary on Paul's own self-perception of the value and the awesomeness of preaching the gospel. My speech and proclamation were not with plausible words of wisdom. Once again, these are plausible secular words of wisdom, but with the demonstration of the spirit and of power.

I tell you, when you heard Paul preach, you heard a sermon. You didn't hear three points in a poem. You didn't hear a bunch of stories that came out of the newspaper last week.

You didn't hear a bunch of internet jokes. You heard something that got your brain engaged and it grabbed you and the spirit of God convicted you. That's the spirit and power, so that your faith might rest not on human wisdom, but on the power of God.

My friends, until you get what we talked about in our last lecture, you're not going to get the reading of this because you're going to enculturate it into your own setting, and you're going to lose the power of what's going on here. You've got to understand it so you can bring your culture and the secular wisdom of your culture that needs to be exposed and put on the table for evaluation, as it is not the way to promote the gospel. We all watch churches try to build their ministries.

Usually, that means more people. That means numbers. Nothing wrong with numbers.

But it often means we got to do it so they'll like it. Well, we don't want to do it so it pushes people away. We don't want to be a bunch of idiots and foolish, but many times we are adapting the methodology of the CEOs of this world and what works.

The pragmatism of our age instead of preaching the gospel of God and allowing the spirit of God to convict and to build the church of Jesus Christ. We need to reverse that, my friends. We need to bring real preaching and real content back to the pulpit so that Jesus Christ is lifted up.

Biblical ethics are lifted up, and thereby, the power of God is lifted up. In chapter 2:1 to 5, then there are divided attitudes, a failure to accurately reflect that. I didn't come to you that way.

Calbert points out in his writing that Paul relates to being a Mediterranean teacher. Part of being a Mediterranean teacher meant that the teacher who had a following had something sort of esoteric to which his followers attached themselves that made that teacher and them special. And he's going to; he relies on that a little bit as we're coming into chapter 2, verses 6 to 16, to explain this part of 1 Corinthians 1 to 4. But I'm going to suggest to you that, yes, there's something esoteric that's going to be coming up in 2:6 to 16.

But it's not Mediterranean esoteric, even though there may be a seeming correlation. Paul's a teacher who teaches mysteries. They were teachers who claimed mysteries.

But Paul's mysteries are rooted in the Old Testament and in the ongoing revelation of God. And we're going to try to probe this very seriously. In fact, I'll be spending more time in my lectures in these first four chapters because there are some exceedingly important issues about the nature of scripture and the authority of scripture that's involved in the proclamation of the gospel.

In 2:6 to 16, the division in the Corinthian church resulted from a failure to appreciate the source and authority of Paul's message. Paul gives the Corinthians an insight into the nature and process of God's revelatory work in verses 6 to 16. In fact, if you look at 6 to 16, right in the middle of this passage, we have the word God has revealed through the Spirit.

God has revealed through the Spirit. We're talking about revelation. Yeah, that's esoteric because it is in keeping with the Judeo-Christian flow of history where God reveals himself to his world and we are to live according to the content of that revelation.

This process of revelation results in a wisdom that transcends human inductive analysis of anything and lays the philosophical foundations for the accurate explication of all created reality. Chapters 1 to 4, this division and the secular wisdom builds up to asking the question, oh well, so where do you become so smart, Paul? Where do you get all this wisdom? Paul's going to answer that in 2:6 to 16. Then, in

the rest of chapters 1 to 4, after seeing where wisdom comes from, Paul gives an example of what wise teachers do.

They become servants of those to whom they minister. Wow, this stuff gets exciting, doesn't it? 2:6 to 16 is sort of a watershed for Paul's apologetics for his apostolic authority and mission. They've been pushing back on Paul.

They've been saying, well, Paul, where do you get your bright ideas? What makes you so smart? Paul's going to tell them. It's not me, Paul says. It's God's revelation about the meaning of the message where everything really gathers, and you better listen.

There's an article by Walter Kaiser called A Neglected Text in Bibliology Discussions, 1 Corinthians 2:6 to 16. It was published in the Westminster Journal. It's the bibliography on page 58.

If you can retrieve that, it would be an article that is well worth reading. Just read the part. You can read it all, but particularly the part on 1 Corinthians 2:6 to 16.

I'm going to talk about it next time. I'm going to bring this into focus and how I think this passage sits in chapters 1 through 4. You can probably get this online if you go search for it. If you're connected to a library that has the ability to search journals, you can find it.

So, more than likely, most of you, I'd say 70 to 80 percent of those who listen, if you get creative and learn how to use your computers, you can find this article and you can read it. So, I'm going to stop here on page 58. This is lecture number 11.

We'll come back together next time, and I'm pretty sure we will finish chapters 1 to 4 next time. And I want to really focus on this section that I'm going into, epistemology so that I can help you to get your handle on the fact of why the Bible is so important. Why is it that it needs to be our only guide for faith and practice, and therefore something that we have got to learn how to understand and how to transfer into our own time and place so that we can be biblical Christians, that we can think biblically, act biblically in the world in which we live. Talk to you later.

This is Dr. Gary Meadors in his teaching on the book of 1 Corinthians. This is lecture 11, Paul's Response to the Oral Communique from Chloe's Household, chapter 1, verse 1 through chapter 2, verse 5.