

# CHAPTER 2



St. Paul begins 1 Corinthians 2 by continuing a primary theme from chapter one: refusing to substitute human philosophy and talented speaking for the gospel of Christ. He therefore reminds the Corinthians Christians that, when he visited the city (see Acts 18 and 20), he did not try to impress them with his learning or dynamic speaking; he taught only the gospel of Christ.

You might wonder about his words in verse three: why and how was St. Paul weak, in fear, and trembling? To understand this verse, we need to know a little about St. Paul's life before he arrived in Corinth. St. Paul and Silas worked in Thessalonica (Acts 17:1-9), where a crowd rioted against their preaching. St. Paul and Silas then went to Berea, where St. Paul again needed to leave after crowds turned against them (Acts 17:10-14). Finally, just before going to Corinth, St. Paul preached in Athens, where his work drew little response from the sophisticated Athenians (Acts 17:16-33). St. Paul was therefore tired and discouraged, perhaps feeling himself unequal to the task of effectively preaching in a wicked city like Corinth.

St. Paul would add that, not only did those who are wise in the ways of the world miss the significance of the person of Christ, but they are blind to all the marvelous plans of God. He demonstrates this by adapting Isaiah 64:4 and 65:17 in 1 Corinthians 2:9: without God's grace, humans cannot comprehend the blessings God has in store for His people. St. Isaac of Nineveh elaborates: "When it says 'which eye hath not seen, nor ear hath heard' and the rest, Scripture has declared to us that the good things to come are incomprehensible and have no similarity to any thing here."

After re-emphasizing that the person who is not illumined by the Holy Spirit - the "natural man" (1 Corinthians 2:14) - is incapable of spiritual discernment, St. Paul concludes with the point that "he who is spiritual judges all things, yet

he himself is rightly judged by no one" (2:15). This is not a statement against being accountable to another person, and certainly not a statement against the need for confession. Instead, it simply reinforces the point that a person indwelt and guided by the Holy Spirit can learn and understand spiritual truths, whereas the Christian will remain a mystery to his or her "unspiritual, soulish neighbors" (to quote Fr. Lawrence Farley). These people are incapable of knowing the mind of the Lord (2:16, quoting Isaiah 40:13); since we have the mind of Christ. Having the "mind of Christ" is inseparable from accepting and following the guidance of the Holy Spirit, as Metropolitan Anthony Bloom says, "What the Church does is to look at every step of its development and its life for what St. Paul calls 'the mind of Christ.' To listen to the teaching of the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit is always young, always new, always modern."



*Have You Read 1  
Corinthians 2 Yet?*

## TODAY'S SPECIAL: READ THE BIBLE

The Bible isn't simply a boring collection of rules and "inspirational quotes;" it shakes us up and forces us to look at how we see the world and live our lives. It gives us teachings and examples about standing up for what we believe, overcoming problems, caring for others, and - most importantly - developing a deep relationship with God while living in a shallow society. Furthermore, it does these things not by simply giving us a long list of rules (although at times the Bible does give us such lists), but also by telling us exciting stories about people who lived out what the Bible teaches, showing us beautiful poetry and powerful songs, and engaging us in fascinating philosophical and theological discussions.

Most importantly, the Bible will help you grow in your relationship with God.... For example, the Bible teaches us how to handle money (Proverbs 13:11; Ecclesiastes 5:10), how to treat others (Colossians 3:12), and teaches us about the attitude we should have toward work (Proverbs 14:23; Colossians 3:23).

As we read the Bible, you'll find that you agree with what Blessed Augustine of Hippo wrote in the fourth century: people who read the Bible "will find there in much greater abundance things that are to be found nowhere else, but can be learnt only in the wonderful sublimity and wonderful simplicity of the Scriptures."

