

“Spiritual Wisdom” 1 Cor. 2:1-18, Epiphany 5A 2-5-17

Tonight, if you watch the Super Bowl, you will hear a lot sounds: the cheers of the spectators, shrill referee whistles, the chatter of commentators, a Lady Gaga spectacle, creative commercials vying for your attention. You might even be making some noise in your living room. An extravaganza of sight and sound!

Not all impactful events are so noisy. When we sprinkle salt and turn on a light our senses of taste and sight react, but not our hearing. As salt transforms a food’s taste and light overtakes a dark room, they make no sound. They are quiet, but no less impactful in their quietness.

We consider Christ’s call to be salt and light along with the words of Paul in Corinthians. Though salt and light are not impressive in themselves, they change what they touch. So Paul’s preaching seem unimpressive, yet by the Spirit’s power it transformed many from death to life.

Like light and salt, the Word of God quietly transforms the world it touches. Those mature enough to receive the Word gain wisdom and knowledge a distracted world cannot detect.

How does God teach us his wisdom? Paul says that no one knows what you are thinking except your spirit. Likewise only the Spirit of God knows what’s on God’s mind. And if you are a believer today, it means that you have the Spirit of God, for no one can believe unless the Spirit enables them. Therefore, having the Spirit of God you know the mind of God.

And what is this wisdom revealed by His Spirit? It is the old, old story of Jesus and His love. This love is proclaimed in the preaching of Paul who knows only to preach Christ, and him crucified. This message requires no elegant or persuasive speech, for the Gospel itself persuades souls to believe. It works quietly but effectively to change minds, hearts and lives.

Jesus is the Word, the Light that cuts through the darkness, which has for too long smothered lives like a black fog. About Jesus, Isaiah wrote, “those living in darkness have seen a great light.” John writes that he was the light that came into the world, which the darkness could not overcome.

And so, he comes into our world with the silent wisdom of the cross. He enters the darkness of our shame and guilt and sheds his gentle light of love. He doesn’t shout or accuse, but guides by His Spirit into the light of truth. He exposes the dark lies that have bound us to our guilt and replaces it with forgiving grace.

He is also salt in this sense. We tend to get distracted by the empty and bland fruit of this world while in search of something real and truthful. When we taste the love and Spirit of God revealed in Scripture, it is as if we have found a delicacy of which we want much.

And with God’s Spirit we can have much more of God’s truth, wisdom and love. As we search the Scriptures and meditate on what they say to us, we can shut out the damning distractions that lead us to lose our trust in Christ.

New England Patriot quarterback Tom Brady succeeds not because he avoids the spotlight and publicity. But rather, because when it’s time to focus, he shuts out the noise and ignores the clicking cameras.

Likewise, we succeed in our Christian walk when we shut everything out to dwell on the wisdom of God. When we remember that nothing else counts in our lives but that Christ was crucified for us, we find peace and reconciliation with God. We are able to receive by faith the life and love he offers.

And we are better able to be the salt and light Jesus says we are. We can impact the world with a quiet witness through which the light of God glows. We don’t yell at the world, but quietly pray for and witness to it the love and peace of Christ. We live so others will see God’s character and caring in us. When we are busy serving our neighbor we overcome the darkness that abides in and around them. They begin to see hope and a reason to believe in God.

Long after the noise of the Super Bowl has subsided, the trophy has been awarded, and the analysts have over analyzed every detail, we are still the quiet yet transforming salt and light of Jesus. We still proclaim Christ and him crucified. That is the true spiritual wisdom, the mind of God, and it is what our world needs every day. Amen