

Spiritual Maturity (3)

Ponder: Recognizing the Wisdom of the Gospel

Scripture: “And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God” (1 Cor. 2:4-5, NKJV).

Paul was likely the most highly-educated of the apostles based on formal schooling. The others caught fish or collected taxes. They were “uneducated and untrained” (Acts 4:13). But Paul was “brought up in this city (Jerusalem) at the feet of Gamaliel, taught according to the strictness of our fathers’ law” (Acts 22:3). Gamaliel was an eminent Rabbi, “a teacher of the law held in respect by all the people” (Acts 5:34). But Paul didn’t flaunt his education as though it made him more credible than the fisherman Peter or the tax-collector Matthew. He wanted people’s faith to be grounded in God’s power, not in man’s wisdom.

Immature people crave the wisdom of men. The persuasive words of a silver-tongued orator find a ready reception among them, regardless of whether the message is true to God’s book. Paul, on the other hand, spoke “wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory” (1 Cor. 2:6-7). That mystery is simply the gospel of Christ, which previously was hidden, but now has been revealed. Paul didn’t concern himself with the latest philosophical fad. He proclaimed God’s wisdom, not man’s.

Little children become bored and demand something new. The philosophers in Athens “spent their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing” (Acts 17:21). Just so, the Bible alone will not satisfy the immature. In the apostles’ day, the Judaizers wanted the gospel plus the Mosaic Law. The Gnostics wanted the gospel plus pagan philosophy and a bit of Judaism. Today we see people claiming extra-biblical revelations and placing tradition on a par with Holy Scripture.

All of this illustrates the need to grow up spiritually. With the Scriptures, “the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Tim. 3:17). We need nothing else! Let us strive to be mature people who recognize and adhere to the wisdom of the gospel!

Song: “Give Me The Bible”

Prayer: Father in Heaven, You have blessed us abundantly by revealing, confirming, and recording Your word, and giving us ready access to it. May we never insult Your grace by acting as though we need something else to make us whole. Help us to grow up and recognize the wisdom of the gospel. In Jesus’ name, Amen.