

**The Best is Yet to Come**  
*1 Corinthians 2:9-16*

Good Morning.

While I was a Pastor in Plains KS, our church did services on a rotating basis at Lone Tree Retirement Center, in Meade KS.

There was a retired school teacher who always made it a point to talk to me when our church would do the service there.

After she got to know me a little, one day she gave me a piece of paper with a story on it, entitled, "*Keep your fork*".

Each time I saw her after this, she would ask me about it; it read

*"A woman was diagnosed with a terminal illness and given three months to live, so she asked her pastor to come to her home to discuss her final wishes.*

*She told him which songs she wanted at her funeral, and what scriptures to read, and which outfit she wanted to be buried in.*

*Then she said, "One more thing. I want to be buried with a fork in my hand." The pastor was surprised.*

*The woman explained, "In all my years of attending church potlucks, I remember when the dishes were being cleared, someone would lean over and say, 'Keep your fork.'*

*It was my favorite time, because I knew something better was coming, like chocolate cake or deep-dish apple pie.*

*So, I want people to see me there in that casket with a fork in my hand and wonder, 'What's with the fork?'*

*Then, I want you to tell them, 'Keep your fork, because the best is yet to come.'"*

*The pastor's eyes welled up with tears of joy as he bid the woman goodbye. He realized that she had a better grasp of heaven than he did, and knew something better was coming.*

*Keep your fork. The best is yet to come."*

When the retired teacher who gave me the story passed away, I attended her funeral and gave this story to her daughter. We were both touched with the significance of the story that day.

Please open your Bibles to **1 Corinthians 2** as we continue in the study of the letter from the Apostle Paul.

Last week...we learned about the plan of salvation and how the ***rulers of this age crucified the Lord of Glory.***

Paul taught that when we share the Gospel, let it be simple, let it be Christ-centered, and let the message be given **selflessly**.

Paul said, ***1 Corinthians 2:4 And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, NKJV***

If the rulers knew Jesus was Almighty, Creator God, they would have prevented the crucifixion; the sin penalty would have not been paid on the cross and we would **remain** spiritually dead.

Jesus became a human being to identify with us in our struggles so that He could die on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins.

Today, we are going to learn that for the Christian; though the world seems as if it is falling apart, “*The Best is Yet to Come*”.

## **I. God’s plan for His Children.**

Read *1 Corinthians 2:9-10*

In this verse, Paul quotes *Isaiah 64:4 For since the beginning of the world Men have not heard nor perceived by the ear, Nor has the eye seen any God besides You, Who acts for the one who waits for Him. NKJV*

Isaiah said this to the nation Israel regarding the Babylonian captivity, but here the Apostle Paul applies this principle to the Church; assuring Christians of God’s plan for His followers.

People say this is speaking of the promise of heaven, but in context, Paul is speaking of the promise of abundant life **today**.

Non believers cannot hear or understand the abundant life the Lord wants for His followers right now; not just some day; we have been studying human wisdom verses God's wisdom.

Human wisdom comes from senses, logic and reason. Corinth held the intellectuals in high esteem during this time of history.

We previously studied, *1 Corinthians 1:20 Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? NKJV*

The problem with human wisdom is that it has no way of accessing God's wisdom; the Holy Spirit is needed for that.

God's wisdom includes the sacrifice of His own Son to pay for human sin and the rulers of this age cannot understand that.

Salvation through the crucifixion of Jesus Christ cannot be understood with human eyes and understanding.

***John 6:65 And He said, "Therefore I have said to you that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted to him by My Father." NKJV***

No **unsaved** person can receive the truth of the Gospel without the help of the Holy Spirit, just as *vs.10* says, ***"God has revealed them (things God has prepared) to us through His Spirit"***.

***John 6:44 No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day. NKJV***

Again, some people use *vs. 9* as a promise of heaven, but the promise of heaven is only for those who have received the mystery of the Gospel; after the God's Spirit revealed it to them.

The limited human mind cannot fully grasp all of the blessings God has for His children.

No matter how much of this world we have seen with all of its wonders and beauty, heaven is so much greater.

With all of the stress, fear and anxiety most of us are facing in these uncertain times in which we live;

...it is easy to say that today is not a good day.

Wiersbe said, *“For those who love God, every day is a good day. It may not look like a good day, or feel like it; but when God is working His plan, we can be **sure** of the best.”*

*It is when we fail to trust Him or obey Him, when our love for Him grows cold, that life takes on a somber hue.*

*If we walk in God’s wisdom, we will enjoy His blessings.”*

Guzik said about ***the deep things of God***: *“In their love of human wisdom, the Corinthians proudly thought Paul was just dealing in “just basics” like the gospel.*

*Paul insists that his message gets to the heart of the deep things of God. (David Guzik)*

## **II. God’s plan is revealed by His Spirit.**

Read ***1 Corinthians 2:11-12***

*What if we could know everything like God knows; what if we could know the outcome of a situation, before it happened?*

*How much better would my decisions be? Knowing how to make informed decisions could change our lives.*

Every born again believer has access to God’s wisdom, so we no longer need to rely on the wisdom of the world.

*How many of us realize that the Lord wants to be our teacher and guide?*

***“No one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God”***

Guzik said, *“Paul argues from the Greek philosophy that like is known only by like.*

*You can guess what your dog is thinking, but you really can't know unless he was to tell you. Even so,*

*“...we could guess what God is thinking, and about His wisdom, but we would never know unless He **told** us.”* (David Guzik)

Because the Spirit of God is a member of the Trinity, He knows everything about God.

God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit make up one God revealed in three persons; known as the Trinity.

Imagine, at Salvation, the Holy Spirit comes to live within God's Children.

***Romans 8:11 But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you. NKJV***

We have the Spirit of God in us who knows the fullness of God.

***1 Corinthians 3:16 Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? NKJV***

Henry Blackaby said, *“When the Holy Spirit dwells within us, we have access to Someone who knows all of God's **intentions**.”*

The Holy Spirit has been freely given to us so that we can know the thoughts of God, the wonder of God, the depth of God and begin to understand His plans.

Ray Stedman said, *“Man by wisdom does not know God. Man by investigation of all the natural forces of life will never find his way to the heart of God.*

*Only God himself must disclose himself, must open himself to us.*

*That he has done by means of the Spirit of God -- the Spirit has come to teach us about God.*

*The Lord Jesus Himself appeared as a man in order that we might have a **visible** demonstration of what God is like.*

*The simplest answer to the question, "What is God like?" is to say He is like Jesus, under all circumstances.*

*But it is the work of the Spirit to show us what Jesus is like.*

*You can read the record of the Gospels, and read the historical record of Jesus, but the living Lord does not stand out from the pages merely by reading them.*

*It is as the Spirit illuminates those pages and makes them vivid and real that you find yourself confronted with the living, breathing Christ himself.*

There are certain things about the Lord and His plans that human wisdom will never understand; we need to be His child and have the Holy Spirit to **illuminate** certain things for us.

### III. The mind of Christ.

Read *1 Corinthians 2:13-16*

Dr. Henry Morris said, “*The ‘natural’ man, still unsaved, and cannot appreciate spiritual truths.*”

*He must first understand Christ’s atoning sacrifice for him, but even that is ‘foolishness’ to him until the Holy Spirit Himself convicts him of its reality.”*

*“Basically, the “natural” man is one who does not have the Holy Spirit residing within him.”*

The difference is spiritual: those not guided by the Holy Spirit, lack a godly spiritual perspective.

The only way to trust in the truth of scripture, including His plan for salvation through faith in Christ, is for God to communicate those truths through His Holy Spirit.

Then notice, *the mind of Christ*;

*1 Peter 4:1 “Therefore, since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, **arm** yourselves also with the same mind”*

*Since Christ suffered for us in the flesh (1 Peter 4:1), that He might bring us to God (1 Peter 3:18); we will suffer as well, so we **arm** ourselves with the **same mind** (thought) of Christ.*



The *same mind* here means the same thought. Most of our poor attitudes about suffering and sin begin in the mind, because we fail to capture every thought to Christ.

Paul said in *2 Corinthians 10:3 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh.*

*2 Corinthians 10:4 For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds,*

*2 Corinthians 10:5 casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. NKJV*

When our minds begin to think about something it should not; we are commanded to take that thought captive and instead like *1 Peter 3:8* says, “*All of you be of one mind*”

It is essential for Christians to be of *one mind*; but whose way of thinking should we follow?

*1 Corinthians 2:16 For "who has known the mind of the LORD that he may instruct Him?" But we have the mind of Christ. NKJV*

In order to have the *mind of Christ*, a person must first have the Holy Spirit, which comes with saving faith in Christ.

Paul instructs us in *Ephesians 5:18 do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, NKJV*

There is a two-fold admonition in *Ephesians 5:18*; don't be controlled by alcohol, instead be **controlled** by the Holy Spirit.

Notice, *He who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin*

Apostle Paul said *Romans 8:9, But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. NKJV*

Many people struggle with the question of why God allows pain and trials in our lives; when we suffer for our faith in Christ, it will change how we view sin, the flesh and the world.

It is through suffering that the Lord purifies us and takes us from being a lump of coal and changes us into diamonds.

After the Lord allows refining in our lives, we begin to desire to live ...*for the will of God*, instead of the *lusts of the flesh*.

After salvation, a believer's responsibility is to yield to the Holy Spirit's leading and let the Spirit transform their life.

The *mind of Christ*, involves wisdom from God, which cannot be understood by the person who does not have the Holy Spirit.

When we think like Jesus, we gain an eternal perspective about suffering, the brevity of this life, and we begin to live our lives based upon Christ's **priorities** instead of our own.

#### **IV. Practical Application.**

I started the sermon with the story of the retired school teacher who gave me the story, “*keep you fork, the best is yet to come*”.

I also quoted Wiersbe who said, “*For those who love God, every day is a good day. It may not look like a good day, or feel like it; but when God is working His plan, we can be sure of the best.*”

Casting Crowns has a song, called ***Be Held***, some lyrics say...

*“So when you're on your knees and answers seem so far away;  
you're not alone, stop holding on and just be held*

*Your world's not falling apart, it's falling into place, I'm on the throne,  
stop holding on and just be held.”*

I want to end this sermon with some biblical truth about today and our eternal destination; as children of the Lord God.

***John 10:27 My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.***

***John 10:28 And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.***

One of the issues for Christians is we believe the Lord is going to take us to heaven some day; but we forget that the Abundant, Eternal life **promised** to us begins immediately at Salvation.

Someone has said that there are over 7,000 promises from God. Besides eternal life, let me remind us of some of the promises for today that the Promise Keeper Himself has given to us.

- He promises to work every aspect of our lives out for our good and His Glory. ***Romans 8:28-30***
- He promises us perfect peace as our mind is on Him. ***Isaiah 26:3***
- He promises to renew our strength when we are weak. ***Isaiah 40:28-31***
- He promises to fight our battles. ***Exodus 14:14***
- He promises to never leave nor forsake us. ***Hebrews 13:5***
- He promises to provide for His children. ***Philippians 4:19***
- He promises to hold us with His right hand. ***Isaiah 41:10***

And many more from the One who cannot break a promise; the Lord is trustworthy for today as well as for eternity and we have this wisdom in us because we have His Holy Spirit.

Jesus also said in ***John 16:7***, “***It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you.***” ***NKJV***

As we understand God’s perfect timing and He allows His plan to happen in our lives; now we are to live for Him every day!

***Hebrews 6:13 For when God made a promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself, NKJV***

The best promise is yet to come; eternity with Jesus Christ.

The Apostle John describe a little bit if heaven in *Revelation 22:1 And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb.*

*Revelation 22:2 In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.*

*Revelation 22:3 And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him.*

*Revelation 22:4 They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads.*

*Revelation 22:5 There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever. NKJV*

## **1. The River.**

*What does crystal signify?* No pollutants, completely **pure**.

Water is the main provision needed for survival and this provision comes from the throne of God.

Since this river comes right from God's throne, it cannot be anything other than pure.

## **2. The Tree of Life.**

**Genesis 3** speaks of a tree of life...

*Why were Adam and Eve prevented from eating from the tree of life in the Garden?*

**Genesis 3:22** *Then the LORD God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil. And now, lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever" —*

**Genesis 3:23** *therefore the LORD God sent him out of the garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken.*

Adam and Eve were already dying and required the Tree to live.

Once Adam and Eve sinned, death entered into the world, and if they ate from the Tree of Life they would have lived **eternally** separated from God in their sin.

After they sinned in **Genesis 3**, God sentenced them to die as per and so they were forbidden to take from the Tree of Life.

Had they been permitted to eat from the Tree of Life, then they would have been forced to live eternally in a sin-cursed world.

But God had a better plan in place—redemption through Jesus Christ with a new heavens and new earth that won't be cursed.

God demonstrated His grace in refusing to allow mankind to live **eternally** in a world filled with sorrow and **suffering**; so He promised Heaven.

### **3. Our New Job Description.**

Read *Revelation 22:3-5*

The Curse entered the world once Adam and Eve sinned; but in heaven all sickness, curses, pain, suffering, divisions; are gone

*...and His servants shall serve Him.*

Heaven will be a place of work and service for God's people, but this work will be a complete blessing, not a tedious duty.

It will be a place of intimate face to face fellowship with Jesus

- We will see Jesus clearly because sin is done away with
- We will see Jesus clearly because care and worry are gone
- We will see Jesus clearly because idols are done away with

What a great culmination of the story of man; the Bible begins with a story of paradise lost because of our sin and rebellion.

Christian, be of good cheer, because we have all of the promises of God.

*How do we keep ourselves from the fear and anxiety of a world that seems as if it is falling apart?*

***Colossians 3:1 If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God.***

***Colossians 3:2 Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.***

***Colossians 3:3 For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.***

***Colossians 3:4 When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory. NKJV***

Although the world seems as if it is falling apart, always keep your fork, because the best is yet to come!