

Union Methodist Church

Sermon Outline: **Spiritual Sight, Revealed Knowledge, Two Kinds of Wisdom**

August 27<sup>th</sup>, 2023. Pastor Michael Larbi

Readings: **James 3:9-18; Matthew 16:13-23**

## 1. Spiritual Sight & Revealed Knowledge

- **Revelation**

- **"the divine or supernatural disclosure to humans of something relating to human existence or the world"** - Oxford Languages & Google
- "The disclosure or exposure by a person of something previously unknown or kept secret" - Oxford English Dictionary
- **"something that is revealed by God to humans"**
  - "an act of revealing or communicating divine truth"
  - "an act of revealing to view or making known"
  - Miriam Webster Dictionary

- **Holy Spirit Given Knowledge, Spiritual Sight**

**Revelation knowledge is that which is "revealed by God to humans."**

As Paul points out,

9 As it is written: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard,

Nor have entered into the heart of man,

The things which God has prepared for those who love Him."

**10But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit**

12Now **we have received**, not the spirit of the world, but **the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.**" 1 Corinthians 1:9-10,12 NKJV

When the Lord through His Spirit reveals things to us,

- we "know" what things that we cannot know any other way
- we "see" more clearly what God is wanting us to see and understand.
  - This is a form of seeing a picture clearly, only with spiritual perception.

Revelation knowledge cannot be taught in school. It is knowledge that is spiritually imparted.

- **“Jesus is the Messiah” - revealed knowledge.**

Jesus asked his disciples:

“Who do you say I am?”

16 Simon Peter answered, **“You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.”**

17 Jesus replied, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for **this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven.**”

Matthew 16:15-17 NIV

This is the ultimate example of revelation knowledge.

We cannot truly appreciate who Jesus is unless it is made clear by divine revelation. This is still the case today. Many do not acknowledge Jesus as the Messiah. Our witness about Jesus as Messiah must be Holy Spirit-led and inspired if our message is to have the transformative impact we desire.

Paul explained how he came to receive the gospel:

“I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that **the gospel I preached is not of human origin. I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ.**” Galatians 1:11-12 NIV

- **The “Rock” Jesus Talked about in Matthew 16**

As part of his response to Peter’s confession of Jesus being the Messiah, Jesus said:

18 And **I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.** 19 I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”

Though not a Greek scholar, I have read that there are two different Greek words used here:

- **petros** - “you are Peter (*petros*)”
- **petra** - “on this rock (*petra*) I will build my Church”

This verse has led to much theological debate over the past two thousand years. There are at least 3 different interpretations to “on this rock I will build my Church”

- **The rock on which the Church is built is Peter.**

This is a predominantly Roman Catholic view and is the basis of the office of the Pope and Papal and apostolic succession. Essentially, the view here is that Peter is the first Pope and all Popes are Peter’s successors. Protestant denominations do not generally accept this interpretation and viewpoint.

- **The rock is the fact that Jesus is the Messiah, and the very revelation that Jesus is the Messiah is the rock on which the church would be built.**

In other words, Jesus is the Rock on which the Church is built.

In addition, the building of the church is through the message that Jesus is the Messiah.

- **The rock is Revelation Knowledge.**

The rock is the revealed knowledge that is received through the Holy Spirit’s continuing work in us and upon us.

This is a predominantly Pentecostal and charismatic view that became very prominent in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In other words, the Church is built through dependence on the Holy Spirit and his ongoing revelations and leadership in every circumstance. It is how we defeat the wiles of the devil and the gates of hell which is raised up against the Church.

## **2. Spiritual Opposition to Divine Revelation and Purpose**

One thing that is clear is that wherever the Spirit of revelation is present, the devil is also present. We see this in the dialogue between Jesus and Peter in Matthew 16.

- **Divine Revelation comes with responsibility (Call to Action)**

Jesus was very deeply aware of his calling and the responsibility of being Messiah. He also had foreknowledge of all that was going to happen to him in fulfilling this call. He shared them with his intimates - the disciples.

**“From that time on, Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised.”**

Matthew 16:21 NRSV

Most of the time, divine revelation comes with a call to action. There is a purpose for that revelation. In the case of Jesus, the revelation was to prepare him for what was to come. In turn, he shared these with his disciples to prepare them.

**We see that also with Paul** – the revelation of Jesus to him on the road to Damascus (Acts 9) came with a clear call to action.

“As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. 4He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him,

“Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?”

5“Who are you, Lord?” Saul asked.

“I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,” he replied.

6**“Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do**

Acts9:3-6 NIV

15But the Lord said to Ananias, “Go! This man is my chosen instrument to proclaim my name to the Gentiles and their kings and to the people of Israel.16I will show him how much he must suffer for my name.”

Acts 9:-15 NIV

- **Easy To Yield to the Devil’s Lies (Satanic Opposition) to God’s Revelation**

Right in the middle of this great dialogue and time of revelation with Jesus and the disciples, the devil was right there and active.

22And **Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him**, saying, **“God forbid it, Lord! This must never happen to you.”**

**23But he turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; for you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.”** Matthew 16:22-23 NRSV

### 3. Testing Received Wisdom: Two Kinds of Wisdom

Peter example is a cautionary tale for us. We are to test every spirit. Not every revelation is from God.

“Beloved, **do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. 2By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God**” 1 John 4:1-3 NKJV

How do we test whether a particular revelation or spirit is from the Lord?

James 3:9-18 helps us by explaining two kinds of wisdom. The text is self-explanatory:

9With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings, who have been made in God’s likeness. 10Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this should not be. **11Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring? 12My brothers and sisters, can a fig tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water.**

13Who is wise and understanding among you? Let them show it by their good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom.

- **Devilish Wisdom**

14But **if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. 15Such “wisdom” does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. 16For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice.**

- **Divine Wisdom**

17But **the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. 18Peacemakers who sow in peace reap a harvest of righteousness.**