

## Union Methodist Church

Sermon Outline: **Revealed Knowledge, Two Kinds of Wisdom - Part 2**

September 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2023. Pastor Michael Larbi

Readings: **Matthew 16:21-28; Romans 12:1-5, 9-13**

### 1. Recap: Spiritual Sight & Revealed Knowledge

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

**Revelation knowledge is that which is "revealed by God to humans."**<sup>1</sup>

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

- **"Jesus is the Messiah" - revealed knowledge.**

Jesus asked his disciples:

"Who do you say I am?"

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

17Jesus 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

### 2. Divine Revelation & The Call to Self-Denial

It is important to bear in mind that God has a plan for the world, and a purpose for our lives within God's overall plan. What is clearly revealed is that God our Father sent Jesus to give his life for all. Top of God's agenda is that all should come to a saving knowledge of Christ. We are called to make disciples.

Therefore, when God reveals things to us, there is usually a call to action on our part, and that action involves putting God first. Putting God first (i.e., giving

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<sup>1</sup> Definition of revelation by Miriam Webster dictionary.

priority to God's plan and purpose) involves self-denial. It involves putting our own interests second and God's interests first.

- **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.

- **Spiritual Opposition to God's Revealed Will**

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

- **The Call to Self-Denial - Having Right Priorities**

Jesus set the ultimate example of self-denial - he gave his life for us.

He calls us to emulate his example.:

"Then Jesus said to his disciples, **"Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. 25For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it.** 26What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit

their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul?27For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what they have done." Matthew 16:24-27 NIV

**"He [Jesus] died for all, so that those who live might live no longer for themselves, but for him who died and was raised for them."**

2 Corinthians 5:15 NRSV

### 3. **Self-Denial: Testing, Knowing, and Doing God's Will In Every Situation**

What does it mean to live for Christ who died for us?

Simply put, it is to know God's will for us in every situation and to do it. Romans 12 helps us to understand this in practical terms. **Paul explains three steps:**

- **Continually Offering Ourselves as Living Sacrifices to God**

"Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to **offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship.**" Romans 12:1 NIV

- **A Refusal to Conform to the Patterns of this World & Mind Renewal**

**"Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind."** Romans 12:2a NIV

How are we to renew our minds?

By refusing to think like the world around us, but choosing to think the way God does. How and what does God think? The scriptures are full of God's thinking. Spending time in the scriptures will change our world view. It will transform us. Spending time with the Lord in prayer brings additional revelation through the Holy Spirit.

- **Test & Approve what God's Will Is**

**"Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will."** Romans 12:2b NIV

The word “then” here is important.

It follows from the preceding sentence on not conforming to the pattern of this world but being transformed by the renewing of our minds. ***Mind renewal precedes the ability to correctly discern or know what God’s will is.***

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

Last week, we looked at James 3:13-18 – two kinds of wisdom.

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.**

- **Live a Life of Love - for God and Others**

Paul puts it this way:

9Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good.

10Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves.

11Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord.

12Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.

13Share with the Lord’s people who are in need. Practice hospitality.

Romans 12:9-13 NIV