Surviving the Chaotic Church

Wisdom of God vs. Human Wisdom
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Based on notes from Quast, Kevin and Prior, David, *The Message of 1 Corinthians.*
Greek tradition of wisdom

1. The Greeks lived to argue. Arguments (discussions) & logics were entertainments.

2. Philosophy:
   - Gk: σοφία → sophia → wisdom
   - Gk: φιλῶ → philo → love/friendship
   - philo + sophia → the love of knowledge

3. Interests in philosophies and rhetoric, not only what is said, but how it is said.
   - Always looking for something profound (deep meaning)
   - Spend time during the day in the squares to “argue”
   - Mythologies (ex. Hercules heel), teach morals & philosophies
   - Wisdom is pursued for personal glorification and power
Jewish tradition of wisdom

1. Jews have their wisdom tradition
   - Wisdom Literatures.
     1. Job – story of a man who do right & suffer
     2. Psalms – classic wisdom, praise, laments, etc
     3. Proverbs – classic wisdom: do right & no suffering
     4. Ecclesiastes – meaning of life
     5. Song of Songs – intimate relationship with God

2. Read Prov 3:1 – 2
   - Is this true in life?

3. John 1:1 “In the beginning was the “logos” (Word)
   - Wisdom Personified, Prov 8:22,23
1. Gnosis → knowledge
   - Gnosticism - heresy in the early church, bad theology
     1. “Secret knowledge” is needed for salvation
     2. All matters are evil, spirit is good
     3. Deny the humanity of Christ
     4. “falsely called knowledge” 1 Tim 6:20 – 21
God’s wisdom vs. Human wisdom (true wisdom vs. false wisdom)

1. “For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel – not with words of (human) wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power. (made void)” (1:17)

2. “For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved, it is the power of God” (1:18) – Gk: δύναµις → dynamis → power
   • The Cross – is the Message (v18)
   • Preaching of the cross (v21) … Spirit work

3. Human Wisdom
   1. Rhetoric: way of speaking (compare with 2:1-2)
   2. Logic: way of thinking, a worldly system of self-centered reasoning
Group discussion:
Godly wisdom OR Human wisdom

1. A man was asked by a teenager for money to buy food, but wasn’t sure if this is genuine. But the man gave him the money. G or H?

2. A pastor was offered a nice used car, but he refused b/c his church is in the middle of fundraising for the building fund.

3. A woman declines a promotion at work so she can have more time to serve the church.

4. During the Holocaust, a family was hiding Jews when the Nazi soldiers knocked on their door looking for Jews. They lied about it.
God’s wisdom vs Human wisdom

1. Paul’s challenge: Where is the wise man/scholar/philosophers?

2. Human Response: (1:22-23)
   - Jews demand miraculous signs (proof of Messiah-King/Jewish)
   - Greeks demand logic – reasoning to solve the problem of sin?

3. Christian Message- Christ crucified
   - A stumbling block for Jews
   - Foolishness to the Greeks, why?

4. Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God (v24) – “Logos”
   - Paul’s mini-conclusion: “For the foolishness of God is wiser than man’s wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man’s strength” (v25)
God’s wisdom vs Human wisdom

1. Paul’s reminder: think of what you were when you were called? (26)  
   (Why did God called you to salvation? )  
   ▪ not many were wise by human standards  
   ▪ not many were influential  
   ▪ not many of noble birth

2. God chose the foolish things of this world to shame the wise (v27-29) … so that no one can boast.
1. Paul’s approach to *preaching* the gospel (2:1-5)
   - not with eloquence (v2) or persuasive words (v4),
   - But with a demonstration of the Spirit’s *power* (5)
   - Paul is determined: “*to know nothing except Jesus Christ and him crucified*” (2:2)
   - Your faith is because of God’s power, not on human wisdom.

2. The wisdom of God is of mysteries and is for the mature.
   (read 2:6-8)

3. Read 2:9-16, the mysteries/secret things of God can be know in what He chooses to reveal to us through Christ. “We have the mind of Christ”.

God’s wisdom vs Human wisdom
Prep: next week – Dec 9, 2012

Read 1 Corinthians chapters 3 – 4

Think about

• What is your theology of rewards in heaven?
• Write a sentence of the definition of leadership

Reflection

• Do I rely on God’s wisdom or human wisdom at work? (attitude)
• What does Godly wisdom look like in my situation?