

1 Corinthians 18-01-21b

Let's resume our study. Now we're looking at 1 Corinthians chapter 2, and Paul has reached the point here in verse 8, 7 and 8, talking about what appears to be a foolish message delivered in what appears to be a foolish method to what appear to be foolish people. And this summarizes the consistent attack today in our postmodern, secular, materialistic world against the gospel. And it has ever been thus; it just takes different forms. But we are fools who believe something foolish communicated by other fools, and that pretty much summarizes a lot of your current college campus especially, is rife with people trying to disabuse those who have grown up in Christian homes of their faith.

And it is something we need to recognize and prepare for, and have an understanding of, so that it doesn't knock the pins out from under especially our younger generation, who come up and say, "Well, you know, now that I'm entering the world of the Illuminati with all of their vast knowledge here on the college campus, I realized that I come from a bunch of primitives, a bunch of backwards, a bunch of benighted, mythologically believing people." Not at all. It is a difference of kind.

Patty was reminding me on the break that years ago we had come up against this subject in a little bit different, from a different angle, and it talked about the fact that it's like operating systems on a computer. You know, there's right now, you've basically got three competing operating systems, largely in the personal computer world, and that's Windows—or wind blows, as people like to say who aren't that fond of it—but Windows, and of course your Apple Macintosh world, and then for the techies and those who like to kind of tinker under the hood a little more, you've got Linux, the Unix-based families and the various distributions, where you can kind of be more of a survivalist and do things for yourself, grow your own food, and, you know, dig your own well. And, I mean, it's great if you are bent in that direction.

And I've dabbled in the latter two, but I've made my living largely in the Windows environment. But one thing everybody knows is that storage media typically gets formatted to use these different operating systems. And in particular, in the early days before Linux really took a foothold, you had an Apple Macintosh and the Apple II and the Apple IIc and IIe and that. And when floppy disks first came out—of course, I'm talking about the Stone Age of computing—but especially when three-and-a-half-inch floppies came out, it was difficult to exchange information with people because a floppy that had been formatted in a Macintosh was gibberish on a Windows machine, and vice versa.

And as was also mentioned during the break, when the Romans encountered the people to the north and the west, and they labeled them barbarians because when they listened to their speech, they just sounded like, "Bar, bar, bar, bar, bar, bar," they thought it was just, these people are just completely uneducated and unintelligible and illiterate and inarticulate. And it's just a different language. It operates using a different vocabulary. It has a different population that speaks it, and to underestimate it is to go greatly astray.

And, you know, in the computer world there are really compelling reasons often to use one of those three operating systems and to operate within those worlds. The creative world still is best off in the Apple Macintosh world. The creative tools for right-brain people—is it right brain I'm thinking of? That's the creative side. I think left brain is your analytic. But for painting, for music—you know, Band-in-a-Box and a lot of these things that had their genesis in the Apple world—are still cutting-edge, state-of-the-art. And a lot of video, audio, and artistic editing, photo editing and such, now you can't surpass what can be done in the Apple Macintosh arena. In Windows, this is the business world. This is the lingua franca of the world. You can send somebody a DOCX and anybody can read it. Linux is really great in the server world. It is much less susceptible to attack and hack and subversion. So your Apache servers worldwide typically run on Linux. The cloud servers, the virtual servers that are provided the world over, are typically in Linux because it's a great technically defensible operating system. It's got huge capabilities and handles storage really well and fast. It's light. You don't have to worry about GUI so much, the graphic user interface. And so there are powerful command-line tools, and once you can work at the shell level and do Bash and go to the root and all that, each of them has its place. And for one to say to the other, "I have no need of you," is really to miss an appreciation for what their strengths are. All of them have weaknesses; all of them have strengths.

Well, the world for the believer is a whole new operating system, and unbelievers can't read your floppies. They have to buy into, they have to be looking for what it offers. They have to feel the need. And if there's one thing to remember from this morning, believers are defined by a sense of and appreciation for our need. Humility begins the door, and the doorknob for faith is the humility that recognizes that we are inadequate, insufficient, and incapable in and of ourselves. It is a species of humility to look at yourself and say, "I can't. I lack the

ability, and I am not. There are things that I am not, and I cannot make myself to be. I cannot connect to the eternal. I cannot please God. I cannot make myself righteous. I cannot solve my corruption and my sin and my fallenness and my temporality, my ephemerality, my here-today-gone-tomorrow, spring-up-in-the-morning-die-by-evening life. I am trapped in it. There is nothing I personally can do about it."

And I recognize that as a need in my life. I need the Creator. I need God. I need deliverance from what I am and what I do. That recognition turns on the ham radio set. It turns on the receiver. It allows us to be tuned in, to be guided by, to be benefited by the foolish message of the cross, to listen to those who communicate it, and to see it connect with and meet that need.

You're never going to explain that to somebody who has not done it for themselves. All of you know exactly what I'm talking about, don't you? Every single one of you that is a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, you know in your heart you have experienced—not just felt—you have experienced the connection to God in your heart and in your life. It's almost indescribable. It is the experience of a color to a blind person who now sees, and you look at spring green. You look at the leaves and the grass and that vibrant, almost fluorescent green that comes out in the spring. You know it when you see it, but trying to describe it to somebody that has never seen green, you just have to open your eyes and look at it for yourself.

Now, you know what I'm talking about. All of you have seen that spring green. You know what I'm talking about. You know, the early morning, the sun comes up, the dew is on the grass, and in its new-sprung grass you can almost smell the green. It's so vivid and vibrant and beautiful. The colors of a sunrise—we've had some gorgeous sunrises where our house faces east, and you look to the southeast now in the mornings, that it's in the direction of the turnpike from where we are. And we're high enough that you can just see the top of the turnpike bridge over there, and on clear days you can kind of hear the trucks at a great distance. But that's where the sun rises now.

And before the sun breaks over the horizon, there'll be some clouds, and this vivid fluorescent crimson will begin to be reflected off the clouds. And there's deep blue sky, and then you've got these billowy clouds. There's shades of gray and white, and then the crimson of the rising sun and the gold that begins to appear just as the sun crests. You've all seen it. You know what I'm talking about. Imagine if you were blind from birth and I was trying to describe that sunrise to you, or trying to tell you of the reality of it. And a man could say, "I feel some warmth in the morning hours. I know that if I face a certain direction, I have a sensation of warmth. But all of this sunset gold, crimson, blue, green, dew, and all the rest, I don't—you know, I've never—explained, I think that's just nuts. Why would you devolve into raptures over something like that? You know, I need things I can touch. I'm concerned about not tripping over the furniture. I don't want to bark my shins on the corner of the bed here, and you're talking to me about something you claim that you've seen and experienced. And what are you talking about? Prove it. Put it where I can touch it. Put it where I can hear it. Put it where I can smell it."

And you'd say, "But what's sad is if the person has just had their eyes shut from birth and refuses to open them." And that's a better analogy to what we're talking about. It's what Paul is talking about. And he says, "We speak the wisdom of God," verse 7, chapter 2, 1 Corinthians 2:7. "We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery." This seems kind of counterintuitive or almost oxymoronic. We speak the wisdom of God, but it's a mystery. All you have to do—I can say one word, and you know exactly what Paul is talking about here: parable. The disciples came, "Lord, you keep talking to these people in parables." What did He say? "I speak to them in parables so that seeing they will see and not perceive, hearing they will hear and not understand." Why? Because the hearts of these people are calloused. Otherwise they would turn and see with their eyes and hear with their ears and be delivered. But I speak to them in parables, and the parable proves that they have hardened their hearts, because the parables make sense to people who have opened their eyes and are looking, who have opened their ears and are listening, the people who have a humble heart that is seeking.

Now, how do I know this is true? Look at the quote in verse 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." This verse often comes to mind when we think about the eternal future. We think about our human limitations and how unlikely it is that we can really appreciate what, quote, "heaven is going to be like," what the kingdom of the Son, kingdom of the Father, and our experience in it in our resurrected bodies—what is that going to be like? What will we do? Where will we be? What will we experience? It seems very difficult to anticipate in a concrete way. We just know whatever it is, it's kind of like what John says about our bodies: "It does not appear what we shall be like, but we know we'll be like Him and we'll see Him as He is." And that's in either the Johannine or the Petrine epistles, escapes me at the moment. But we'd say, "Eye has not seen, ear has not heard, hasn't entered the heart of man what God has prepared for those who love Him." We say, "Well, those are those things that we

anticipate categorically and generally and with great confidence and hope, but we don't know exactly what they are." And that is true—but that's not what this verse says, because read the next verse: "But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit."

So what "eye has not seen, what ear has not heard, and what hasn't entered into the heart of man, these things that God has prepared for those who love Him"—what Paul is talking about is what we have been talking about this morning. You're not going to get it by the seeing of the eye. You're not going to get it by the hearing of the ear. It is going to come in the heart through the ministry of the Spirit. It's a different operating system. It's a different radio frequency. It requires different equipment. The eye gate and the ear gate, the materialistic, humanistic, scientific evidence world that communicates reality for practical purposes—I walk through the room and I don't trip over the furniture. I open the door before I walk and I don't bang my face. Very helpful to have eyes and ears.

But the things that God has prepared for those who love Him, they are knowable, but they are not communicated by sight or by simple hearing. They enter the heart via the ministry of God's Holy Spirit. When do we get the presence and power of God's Holy Spirit on an indwelling and ongoing basis? At the point that we accept Christ as our Savior, and not before. Holy Spirit only reveals three great truths prior to that: sin, righteousness, and judgment, as the Lord Jesus tells us.

God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. This is the point of the whole preceding, the last half of chapter 1 and the first half of chapter 2 here, is if you're trying to get this by conventional wisdom channels, you're never going to get it. It doesn't come with the wisdom and the power that eyes and ears sense. It is communicated by the Spirit to those seeking hearts. "For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God." The deep things—creation, the witness of the heavens, the witness of the created world around us—that's shallow things. That's observable to everyone. The deep things of God are communicated by the Spirit. You say, "Well, how do I know I'm not listening to some charlatan dreaming up a bunch of stuff?" And boy, you can sure find it today on the internet. You know, the internet is, as I've mentioned before, kind of a level playing field. Anybody who wants to say anything can say it, and to find who's qualified to speak, who has the thoughtfulness and the wisdom to speak, is very difficult to find. You go out there looking for good Bible teaching on YouTube, let's say, it's frightening. And I think God the Holy Spirit has to guide people to sources where they can find good teaching, because if you just throw a dart at YouTube and pull up some guy talking about your subject, nine times out of ten he's going to be strange or not get what the Bible actually says about it. I mean, obviously it's not a matter of, "Oh, we've studied Greek and Hebrew and we know better." I mean, these things are just blatantly bizarre and eyebrow-raising and frightening and deceptive.

The deep things of God. "What man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God." So what does this tell us? The message. Keep those three things in mind now. What have we been talking about for 20-odd verses here? What seems like a foolish message, when the Holy Spirit communicates it, you realize, "Oh, that's not foolish at all."

If you all have ever messed with—since I'm talking about radio so much—one of the great disappointments to my life was in the early days, I was a little kid, and you could listen not only to the commercial stations but amateur radio, and you could hear a guy that had rigged up an antenna and had a ham set, and he's in Arkansas, and here's another guy in Chile, and here's another guy in somewhere in Europe, and these guys are talking. And typically they're hobbyists, and so they spend a lot of time talking about their radio gear. But every once in a while they talk about, you know, the situation, the government's doing this, or here's our weather, or, you know, typhoon this and hurricane that, and fascinating. And they would do ship-to-shore calls. Hams would assist, and a guy would connect to a frequency on a Navy ship and bridge a call, and the guy could talk to his family. I heard a couple of those calls, and guys were out in the South China Sea, you know, between Vietnam and Cambodia and Thailand and that, and there'd be a ship-to-shore call and a guy would be saying, "Hello, Doris. How are the kids?" You know, and it was an amazing service that they could offer. You know, and on the downtime of the ship they could tune in a spare frequency and bridge calls back to the States.

I knew a man named Ike Holmes in Tulsa that was in her—he was a high school classmate of my grandmother. He ran a ham radio deal, and we were invited over to his house. My cousin Scott and I went over there, and he spent a whole afternoon showing us how he did that. He would bridge calls, and he had a teletype, and he would get news, you know, that would come in. But the teletype signals, when you tune them in on your radio, it just sounds like computer noise. It's just beeps at different frequencies. You know, it sounds like electronic chicken clucking. It's hard to describe, but it's just rapid beeps at several different frequencies all going at once. But Ike

had the equipment that would turn that into typewritten text. It seems like gibberish. You can listen all day, even with a shortwave radio, and never interpret what that is.

But what I started to say is, beginning especially in the '70s and into the '80s, ham radio operators began to use what they call single sideband. I won't go into the details of it, but if you tune it in with a standard ham radio, it sounds like the guy is being smothered with a pillow while he's talking. You can tell someone is talking. You can hear the shapes of the words, but the distinction of his syllables, it just sounds—mash your hand over your face and talk—that, to where you can't make out the words, that's what it sounds like. Because you have to tune in two frequencies. There's a main frequency and a side frequency, and the sideband, the two get muxed back together in a specially built radio, and you get a superior quality signal. And so ham radio operators went to that. And so then you had to buy a special radio, and I had one for a while, and it was so cool because I was back to it now.

Largely, the most interesting stuff on shortwave—the internet has killed shortwave. Voice of America is gone. HCJB is gone. All you hear are wild-eyed preachers, like the widow of Gene Scott. That lady you almost can pick up in your fillings. I mean, I've never heard so many frequencies carrying the exact same message, and she has soaked the airways with her, quote-unquote, teaching of the Word of God. And the communists, Radio Havana Cuba, still going strong, still propagandizing. And Voice of America no longer does the same across Iron Curtain borders. But, so now what's interesting is to listen to amateurs talk.

There's a weird thing in social media now where people think you're stalking if somebody put something out on the public channel, but if you read it, you're stalking them. You know, even though they've put it out for public consumption, if you actually read it and you're not a good friend or it wasn't directed at you, well, you're stalking. Look, if you put something out in the public domain, you better expect everybody's going to read it. This is the nature of posting on bulletin boards and so on. Anybody can respond. Anybody can listen. Don't have an expectation of privacy when you put a picture of yourself with a lampshade on your head, and then somebody looks at it and says, "Wow, you had a lampshade on your head." You say, "You're stalking me." Why did you post it? Don't post what you don't want to be seen by your worst enemy or your boss.

The same thing with shortwave. Shortwave operators know that there are guys who enjoy listening to shortwave operators talk. They know they're being overheard by people who can't transmit, and they're fine with it. So it's fun to go tune in and listen to guys talking about all kinds of things, but you've got to have an even more special radio.

"What man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God." Now look, verse 12: "We have received not the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, so that we might know the things that had been freely given to us by God." Go back and read verse 9: "Eye has not seen, ear has not heard, hasn't entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him." Verse 12: "But we've received the Spirit from God that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God." Things freely given to us by God. Freely given. What's another word for that? What's our word for what God freely gives? What's God's nature? It's grace. It's freely given by grace. You have been saved through faith. The grace of God comes to the humble. God resists the proud. Grace comes to the humble. Why? Because the humble turn that door, recognizing need and saying, "I need to go to a new place. God has provided the door in Christ. I will enter through that veil. I will walk through that door because I have a need. I need what God has provided. I need what God has freely given."

Now, you can freely give. I've been getting all kinds of free gift of a week of Sirius radio. You know, this is the age we live in now. Somebody's going to give you a free gift. Used to be they'd send you a \$2 bill in the mail, or they'd, you know, they'll still send you address labels that you can use at Christmas. You know, here we are, the disabled sons of the American something or other, and here's you some address labels. It's a free gift. But now we get electronic free gifts.

And so SiriusXM has just been badgering me to come back and subscribe, and so they say, "Turn on your radio. We've given you a free week of Sirius." Well, you know what? I have not turned on my radio. Has the gift been freely given? Has SiriusXM freely given me a week of 140 channels of listening? Yes. Does it do me any good at all? Have I actually availed myself of the gift, received it, enjoyed it, got the benefit, had the information transferred to me from their news channels or the music from their music channels? No. Why? I have not reached over, turned on the knob, hit the satellite button, and tuned in for my free week. Haven't done it. Doesn't change that it's a free gift. Doesn't change that it's available pretty much to anybody who has canceled their

subscription with XM. It's available to all, but the only people who benefit from it are those who turn on the radio and listen. It's free.

What would really be great is if they said, "You know what? Satellite radio is free forever. Turn it up." I would use it then. But I right now don't want to pay the subscription fee for various reasons, and so I'm not interested. I don't feel the need that would cause me to subscribe and pay. So even though there's a free gift, I don't feel the need. Not in my truck that much, not that truck.

What are we saying here? We have received the Spirit that we might know the things that are freely given to us by God. Now, who cares about the things that have been freely given to us by God? Who cares about those? Does Richard Dawkins care about the things freely given to us by God? The late Christopher Hitchens? Unbelievers, notorious unbelievers, don't know, don't care. Why? Don't feel the need. I don't have a need for that. Therefore I'm not looking for any solution to those problems, and I certainly consider what you're saying about the solution to those problems to be foolishness. It's just foolish, and it's going to remain foolish until someone says, "Wow, I really need—I mean, acupuncture seems foolish to a lot of people until they have a pain that conventional medicine can't cure, and they say, 'I have such a need to get rid of this pain, I'll try anything. You say acupuncture works? I'm there. Stick some needles in me.'" And there are people that get relief. Chiropractic—I'm deeply reserved about the benefits of chiropractic—but I know any number of people who couldn't get help for their pinched nerves and spinal inelegancies and have gone to chiropractic and have been helped. They had a need. They overcame any skepticism they had. They went and they got relief. It met the need, and you know you have found something that works for you. Can you necessarily proselytize and get the world to come in and everybody's going to do it? Only people who have your kind of need and find that that solution meets the need are going to fully and truly appreciate it. It can be foolishness to other people who, you know, it's easy to dismiss a thing when you don't have a need for it. You wait till you find somebody that really needs it.

And taste and see that the Lord is good, that the Lord is gracious. Taste and see. The Lord's been lifted up. He's drawing all men to Himself. No man can come except the Father draws him. So what did the Father do? God gave His only begotten Son so that whoever believes in Him doesn't perish but has eternal life. Of course, no man can come unless the Father draws him. You read Romans and you understand that salvation is entirely by grace.

The whole issue in that section of Romans that includes chapter 8 and chapter 9 is about God making universal supply. He says, "Jacob have I loved, Esau have I hated," and people say, "See there? God has chosen only Israel." Paul's whole point in that section of Romans is, "Look, Gentiles, it's not the book of Hebrews; it's the book of Romans," right? And Paul says, "Look, all of this, 'Jacob have I loved and Esau have I hated,' I'm talking to you people who are basically Esau, because God has said if you turn in faith, that trumps birth order, it trumps nationality, it trumps your race, it trumps your origins, it trumps everything. And God has chosen the foolish things to confound the wise."

And even when you look at the promises of God to Israel in the Old Testament and you say, "Well, you've got to be Israel or you're out," God says—Paul ends up saying—"You know, these chosen people that are supposedly elected, and God's purpose and election is going to stand, 'Jacob have I loved'"—what is he going to say in the next chapter? "I weep over my people Israel because they're not being saved." If you say election is effectual, why is Paul weeping and saying, "I would give up everything God has given me for the sake of my brothers, to whom belong all of these things, and they've missed it"? Why isn't Paul rejoicing in the election of God because "Jacob have I loved"? Calvinism's got that whole thing backwards. Paul has no case to make about God's grace opening up to the Gentiles and grafting in the wild branches if God's purpose and election is going to stand and He says, "Jacob have I loved." You're done. Jacob I love. Be Jacob, or, you know, start putting on your swimming suit for the lake of fire.

So, as it is written, verse 9, 1 Corinthians 2, "Eye has not seen, ear has not heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him." And if your New King James is like mine, it's in italics. Means it comes from the Old Testament. You'd look, check your text note there. Mine's got 9a. You go over into the margin, and it says Isaiah 64:4, to which turn. Isaiah 64. We're going to be looking at Isaiah 64 and Isaiah 65, and you'll find that this is a synthetic quote. It is not a verbatim quote by any stretch. It synthesizes chapter 64 and 65.

"Eye has not seen, ear has not heard, nor has entered into the heart of man the things that God has prepared for those who love Him." You think, "Well, surely that's going to be very close in Isaiah." Look at what it says.

Start at the beginning of the chapter, verse 64, verse 1 of chapter 64: "Oh, that You would rend the heavens, that You would come down, that the mountains might shake at Your presence—as fire burns brushwood, as fire causes water to boil—to make Your name known to Your adversaries." Stop right there. Interesting, no? What is the Isaiah prophet crying out for here? "Oh, that You would provide scientific evidence for Your presence and Your power," right? What does it say? God's in His heaven. Isaiah knows He's there, but what is he saying? "Oh, that You would split the sky and stick Your face through, that You would come down, that the mountains would quake." They've got seismograph equipment all over the place. "If You would shake the mountains, then they would know You're there. As fire burns brushwood, as fire causes water to boil." Notice: scientifically demonstrable, repeatable, testable, falsifiable. Fire boils water. Fire burns brush. Okay, now we're in the world of the material. "Oh, Lord, if You would irrupt—irrupt into the material world—and make Your presence known, that—and show them—the nations would tremble at Your presence. When You did awesome things for which we did not look, You came down and the mountains did shake at Your presence. Since the beginning of the world, men have not heard nor perceived by the ear, nor has the eye seen any God besides You."

The few times that there has been miraculous irruption into the world, it has been the one and only true God who acts for the one who waits for Him. God does not do this on demand. God doesn't wait on us. We wait on God. "Wait on the Lord. Be of good cheer; He shall strengthen my heart. " "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength, mount up with wings, run, walk"—they that wait. He acts for the one who waits for Him. "You meet him"—singular—"who rejoices and does righteousness." You meet him, singular. There are individuals who wait, who remember, who rejoice, who obey and do righteousness and remember God and His ways.

Now look at the shift in verse 5: "You are indeed angry, for we corporately have sinned. In these ways we corporately continue, and we corporately need deliverance." This is national deliverance for Israel. "We are all like an unclean thing, all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags. We all fade as a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away." Now pay attention to the number of the pronouns here, because there are universal statements made about groups and there are specific statements made about individuals. Did you notice the number of the pronoun change? Go back to verse 4. "Since the beginning of the world, they"—this is the plural here. It says men in italics, but this is a plural. This is a group. "They have not heard nor perceived by the ear, nor has the eye seen any God besides You. " This is the witness of God to the world. There are records of God's miraculous interventions, God's miraculous power, but they're episodic and they are memorialized in eyewitness testimony. That's how we know about them. And this is the God who acts for the one who waits for Him. God will act for the one who waits for Him.

"You meet him," singular, "who rejoices and does righteousness." You meet him, singular. There are individuals who wait, who remember, who rejoice, who obey and do righteousness and remember God and His ways. Now look at the shift in verse 5: "You are indeed angry, for we corporately have sinned. In these ways we corporately continue, and we corporately need deliverance. " This is national deliverance for Israel. "We are all like an unclean thing, all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags. We all fade as a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away. And there is no one who calls on Your name, who stirs himself up to take hold of You, for You have hidden Your face from us and have consumed us because of our iniquities. "

There's no accident in the Word of God between the singular and the plural. Isaiah's argument here is there are individuals who wait. "You will meet the one who rejoices and does righteousness, who remembers You in Your ways." But right now, because we are corporately under judgment, those individuals are discouraged from doing that. They have no avenue of expression. They have no hope. There is no one who calls on Your name, who stirs himself up to take hold of You, because You have hidden Your face from us. It is a discouragement to the individuals.

Verse 8: "But now, O Lord, You are our Father. We are the clay, and You our Potter. We corporately, we nationally, we collectively, we are the work of Your hand. Do not be furious, O Lord, nor remember iniquity forever. Indeed, please look—we all are Your people. Your holy cities are wilderness. Zion is a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation. Our holy and beautiful temple, where our fathers praised You, is burned up with fire. All our pleasant things are laid waste. Will You restrain Yourself because of these things, O Lord? Will You hold Your peace and afflict us very severely?"

So what is Isaiah's case here? This is a prayer. This is a prayer of corporate confession, corporate lament. We've seen one in Ezra. We've seen one in Daniel in recent study, right? This is Isaiah praying this prayer to the Lord, and he's saying, "Lord, rightly and righteously You have judged us, but the individual who turns to You and looks to You and who waits for You, You will act for him." So he is basically going to make a remnant argument here. He's going to say there are those of us, and there would be more of us, who would turn and look

to You, but no one is stirring himself up to take hold of You because You have hidden Your face from all of us, and it's a time of national discipline.

So God answers this prayer, and He says, "Your solution is I need to come in and act on behalf of the nation so that these individuals will respond. If I restore the nation, you say more people will lay hold of Me and begin to be these righteous people." God says, "I'm going to show you something new and different that you haven't thought of," because God's ways are higher than our ways, His thoughts are higher than our thoughts, His wisdom seems foolish to us. God says, "I'm not—I've already done that. Did you read the first 39 chapters of your own book? I've already acted on behalf of the nation, and the individuals didn't respond. I'm going to do a new thing."

So look at chapter 65: "I was sought by those who did not ask for Me. I was found by those who did not seek Me." Notice those, them—a group. God basically says, "Look, you're talking about corporate Israel and individuals within it." He says, "There's another group that's not asking for Me, that's not seeking Me," i.e., the Gentiles. "They're not defined by covenant. They're not historically connected to Me. But I'm going to be sought and found by them. I said, 'Here I am, here I am,' to a nation that was not called by My name." God is going to extend the call beyond the borders of the covenant people. And He says, "Here I am." He says, "I've stretched out My hands all day to the alleged people of God, rebellious people who walk in a way that is not good, according to their own thoughts, a people who provoke Me to anger continually to My face, sacrificing in the gardens, burning incense on altars of brick, sit among the graves, spend nights in the tombs."

You remember the Garden of Uzza study that we did, that right there against the temple wall, there's this weird worship of the dead and sleeping with the graves, and Uzza gets buried there, and the cult is perpetuated. It's an awful thing. "Sit among the graves, spend their nights in the tombs, eat swine's flesh and the broth of abominable things in their vessels, who say, 'Keep to yourself, do not come near me. I am holier than you,' smoke in My nostrils, a fire that burns all the day. Behold, it is written before Me: I will not keep silence, but will repay, I will repay them into their bosom, your iniquities and the iniquities of your fathers together," says the Lord. Corporate judgment on the group, on the category, "who have burned incense on the mountains, blasphemy on the hills. I will measure their former work into their bosom."

Thus says the Lord. Now look at this, verse 8: "As the new wine is found in the cluster and one says, 'Do not destroy it. There's a blessing in it.'" This is talking about, you know, there's wine in the vats, and they talk about wine getting corked, people who keep it and the airtight seal is broken and the cork deteriorates into it, and it turns into this awful, nasty, undrinkable soup inside the, you know, the wine that's been aged and kept and it's supposed to be such a good year from eighteen-something. Well, when they finally open it and try to drink it, it's spoiled.

But it says, "As new wine is found in the cluster." Now, is there actually new wine in a cluster? Wine is a product of crushing the grapes, storing the grapes in wineskins, fermentation process taking place. But new wine is only very lightly fermented because it has just been collected, but it has been crushed from the grapes. But he says, "As the new wine is found in the cluster." Somebody looks at the cluster and says, "You know what? That's not in the wineskin yet. It's not in the inventory yet. It hasn't aged and fermented yet, but there's potential there. That cluster—don't knock down that vine. Don't get rid of that. There's new wine in that cluster." So one says, "Don't destroy it. There's a blessing in it. There's a hope in it. There's a future in it."

"So I will do for My servants' sake that I may not destroy them all. I will bring forth descendants from Jacob, and from Judah an heir of My mountains." What is He saying? I'm not going to mow down the entire vineyard. I'm going to leave some grapes, and there will potentially be some wine in those down the road. So not all—remember the whole thing about "My vineyard"? "I hedged around it," that came and it didn't bear. But He says, "I see a little bit of potential here, so I'm going to preserve." This is God preserving a remnant of individuals in a corporately judged group. "I will bring forth descendants from Jacob, from Judah an heir of My mountains. My elect shall inherit, My chosen shall inherit it, My servants shall dwell there." Now out of the destroyed vineyard there are a few clusters in which God can see new wine, and He says, "These are the ones who are going to inherit."

Now, does He just randomly choose them and say, "I'm just going to spare a few random grapes"? What is the context here? Those who wait for Him, who rejoice and do righteousness, who "remember You in Your ways," back in 64:4 and 5. Those are the chosen. Those are the ones that God is going to preserve. It's in the context. Keep reading here. We've seen it in the preceding context. Keep reading.

"I will bring forth these descendants. Sharon shall be a fold of flocks," verse 10, 65, "the Valley of Achor a place for herds to lie down, for My people"—what?—"who have sought Me." "My people who have sought Me." Now, didn't He just say, "My elect shall inherit it"? Who are the elect? "My people who have sought Me." God chooses those who choose Him. "I was sought by those who did not seek Me. I was found by those who did not seek Me. You are those who forsake the Lord, who forget My holy mountain, who prepare a table for Gad and who furnish a drink offering to Meni. Therefore I will number you for the sword." "Therefore I will number you for the sword." What you chose, "and you shall bow down to the slaughter, because when I called, you did not answer."

Remember "the called" in 1 Corinthians chapter 1, verse 24, "to those who are called." Those who are chosen. What is the calling of God? The called in Romans 8:28 through 30. The called are those who enter into God's plan and purpose of salvation. SiriusXM can call me all day long via email and tell me I've got free radio, but I am not a listener until I turn on the radio. They have called. I've heard the call, but I'm not the called because I'm not responded. I've not entered into that arena.

"Therefore, thus says the Lord God," verse 13, Isaiah 65: "Behold, My servants shall eat, but you shall be hungry. My servants shall drink, but you shall be thirsty. My servants shall rejoice; you shall be ashamed. My servants shall sing for joy of heart; you shall cry for sorrow of heart and wail for grief of spirit. You shall leave your name as a curse to My elect, My chosen. You will leave your name as a curse to My chosen, for the Lord God will slay you and call His servants by another name."

We're not Israel. This whole replacement theology thing, the church is the new Israel—God says no. "When I call the nation that isn't seeking Me and people respond, I'm going to give them a new name." We are in Christ. We are of Christ. We are a gift of God the Father to the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the firstborn among many brethren, and we are it. We are the body of Christ. He is the head of all things to the church. We have a new name. We're not called by the old name. "The Lord God will slay you and call His servants by another name, so that he who blesses himself in the earth shall bless himself in the God of truth. He who swears in the earth"—notice, we're back to, "Oh Lord, that You would rend the heavens and come down and give evidence." When you look at the earth, you bless yourself in the God of truth. If you're going to swear on the earth, you swear by the God of truth, "because the former troubles are forgotten and because they are hidden from My eyes."

"For behold, I create"—this is, remember, "Eye has not seen, ear has not heard what God has prepared for those who love Him." This is the other cross-reference in your New King James for that verse out of Corinthians—"for behold, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former shall not be remembered or come to pass." "I create a new heavens and a new earth, and the former shall not be remembered or come to pass." This is what I create. You're not going to find your vindication in this creation. Is it evidence? Does it witness of God? Of course. But God is not going to come down and shake the heavens. He's not going to pour Himself into a flask for science to try to get them to believe. If you want to look to creation, look to a new heavens and a new earth. "Be glad and rejoice forevermore in what I create. For behold, I create Jerusalem as rejoicing, and her people a joy. I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in My people. The voice of weeping shall no longer be heard in her, nor the voice of crying. No more shall an infant from there live but a few days, nor an old man who has not fulfilled his days. The child shall die at a hundred years old, but the sinner being a hundred years old shall be accursed." Remember we talked about this when we did Isaiah. This is the millennial kingdom. If you die at a hundred, it's because it was capital punishment in the millennial kingdom. At a hundred years old, you're still considered a child because the lifespans will be restored to the pre-flood lengths. "They will not build and another inhabit. They will not plant and another eat. As the days of a tree, so shall the days of My people be. My elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands."

It's "My chosen. My chosen. My called. My elect." Who are they in this context? It's defined clearly in the context. Who is seeking? Who is waiting? Who is pursuing righteousness? Who is looking at God's plan and purpose? It's not a lotto that you happen to win because God happened to predestinate you, God happened to elect you. "We shouldn't ask why God didn't save everyone. We should just be glad that God saved anyone." That is blasphemy. God has valid and knowable reasons for choosing.

And if you are the called, all things work together for good to the called. Is that what it says? What's Romans 8:28? Say it with me. "All things work together for good to those who love God, who are the called according to His purpose." It's a parallel statement. The called are those who love God. We choose to prioritize God. We choose to seek God. We choose to find in Him the answer to our need. It is an operation of the humble heart. If you recognize your need, and you recognize what God has done, and the lengths that He has gone to, and the sacrifice that He has made to meet our need, how can you not love God? "We love because He first loved us."

God loved the world and gave His only begotten Son so that whosoever believes would not perish. Recognizing that God has gone to that extent and has met our need in Christ, how can you not appreciate Him? How can you not glorify Him? Why would you not want to live for Him and live with Him and prepare yourself for service in His kingdom and in His future, both now and in the ages to come? Who would not want to do that?

"All things work together for good, for God's good, for those who love God. They are the called according to His purpose." And then you have all the rest of 29 and 30. They are predestinated to salvation? No. The destiny is to be "conformed to the image of His Son." You don't get conformed to Jesus at the point of salvation. That is a lifelong process. That is Romans 12:1 and 2, present your body as a living sacrifice, grow in grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. "Be not conformed to this world; be transformed," by salvation? No, "be transformed by the renewing of your mind," by what we're doing this morning. Be renewed, be transformed, be conformed. That's our destiny. That's our opportunity. That's our potential, if we choose it, to be conformed.

"Predestinated us." When He says predestinated us, He doesn't say He predestinated "you," singular, and it's all a foregone conclusion. "Us," it's corporate: the class of people who accept Jesus Christ as Savior in this age. The destiny for the church, the destiny for the body of Christ, is to be conformed to Christ so that He can be the firstborn among many brethren. And all of the rest of the justification and the vindication and the glorification rests on loving God, hearing the call, responding to the call, being the Isaiah 64 and 65 responders, turning on that ability to hear the wisdom of God, to receive instruction from God, to have the witness of the Holy Spirit of God that operates in a completely different environment than the world.

To the world, it's single sideband. To the world, it's teletype signals. To the world, it's "Bar, bar, bar, bar, bar." Of course they're not going to understand it, and they don't want to understand it. They want to find an excuse to dismiss it and push it away, because to recognize its validity is to recognize our own insufficiency and our own need. And a lot of us just don't want to do that. And God will resist the proud. Who does He give grace to? The humble.

That's what Paul is talking about. And when he alludes back to Isaiah chapter 64 and 65, talking about what God reveals and why He reveals it, that's what fleshes out the rest of chapter 2. We've received, verse 12, "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. These things we also speak." These things, witnessed by the Spirit, that's what we speak. That's the foolishness of the message. That's the foolishness of preaching. And that's the foolishness of you for listening. It's not foolish at all. It is the wisdom of God communicated by the Spirit of God.

"These things we speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches, but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual." Science has no access to the spiritual. Materialism has no access to the spiritual. The mind of man has no access to the spiritual. "The natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God. They are foolishness to him, nor can he know them because they are spiritually discerned. But he who is spiritual judges all things."

Everything is available. Everything that the wisdom-of-the-world man knows is available to us, but we have it in a wider context. We have those additional facts that make sense of it in ways that can never be accessed by the world. I mentioned at the beginning, sometimes you think you know the story. I've told you about being whipsawed back and forth by these "FBI Files" deals and different crime depiction shows that go back and review a case, and it seems for all the world like so-and-so is guilty, but then they find a fiber, or they find a fingerprint, or one fact suddenly changes the complexion of the whole case. It seems like the husband is completely exculpated. He's got an ironclad alibi. He couldn't have been there. He couldn't have done it. No motive. Oh, but then we discover this. Then we discover that.

I'll never forget the one where there was a doctor who a girl went in to have something done by her doctor. She was real upset because she'd had an argument with her boyfriend, and so he said, "Well, let me give you something to calm you." Well, he shot her up with a drug that you give right before you give somebody anesthesia, general anesthesia, and you lose all muscle control and go kind of catatonic and comatose, and then he raped her. And she remembered it, but she couldn't do anything about it. And when they tried to—she saved things. There was DNA evidence that she put in a Ziploc bag and was ready to go take this guy out of the market of perverts. But when they tested his DNA, they took a blood sample, and it did not match. And she said, "There's no way." And his defense in the court was, "This drug that was administered and was found in her blood system is known to produce hallucinations. She hallucinated the whole thing. Look, the DNA doesn't match."

Well, years went by, and she kept trying by every means. She said, "I know this guy raped me, and I'm not going to take this lying down." And so she went and got him before the court, and they went and took a second blood sample, and the DNA did not match. And you say, "The guy has to be innocent. I don't care what you say. The DNA doesn't match." Come to find out, the guy is a doctor, and he took a plastic tube and filled it with one of his patient's blood and inserted it in his arm. And they videotaped the second and third time that they took the blood, and they wanted to take it in his fingers, and he said, "No, I bruise easily. I have a condition. You've got to take it out of my arm." And every time he made them take it out of his left arm in the vein. He wore a long-sleeved shirt rolled up, and he would just expose enough of it that they could see the bulge for the vein. Well, he had stuck this plastic tube of somebody else's blood into his arm. That's where they were taking the blood and doing the DNA test.

Well, this gal was so frustrated and so sure that he was guilty, she hired a private detective who broke into his car and found a ChapStick, and she took the epithelial cells and had them tested, and the DNA was a match to the rape kit. And so then she knew, but of course it was inadmissible because the guy violated three or four laws breaking in and taking it. But, so they made him go in and take a third blood test, and it was miraculous that the gal could get it to go this far because everybody thought, "Well, you know, you're just nuts." And they went in. Well, amazingly, this is like seven years later, but the guy never took the tube out of his arm. But when they tried to take the blood, that blood had by now thickened and wouldn't come out the needle, and they finally got the guy. They finally went in and got a different blood sample, and they took cheek swabs and everything else and did a proper DNA test, because he ended up abusing a stepdaughter in his house, and those charges brought him up. And when they did the DNA testing, it matched everything, and he's serving long consecutive sentences now.

But you would look at the available evidence and say, "He can't be guilty, the DNA clearly doesn't match," until you find out that he gamed the system. He fooled the system. He used somebody else's blood. And one fact can change everything. We have all of the facts through God the Holy Spirit. We can make sense of everything in this world. Unbelievers can try to make sense of the world, and they can do so to a limited extent, but we have the full-orbed revelation of God. Not just that, but the things that the Spirit communicates to us about the present and the future. What a gift. What a blessing. Not to be overlooked, not to be taken lightly, not to be given a low priority in our lives.

What the Spirit teaches us is all important. It's those extra few facts that make the difference between bearing fruit and pleasing God, glorifying God in this life, and being prepared to please and glorify and serve Him in the next. It is all about that extra information that comes on the Spirit's channel. We have got to access it. We have to value it. We have to be seeking it. And the beginnings of that is not me saying, "You really need to do this." The source of it and the motivation for it is remembering our need. We need God. We need God's power. Even when we're saved, we need the daily infusion of God's power that comes to us by His Word and by His Spirit. And if we ever forget our need, we turn left and north into Pharisaism, into self-sufficiency, into righteousness by works. We can do many of the same things, but they don't count anymore because they are not in the realm of God's Spirit and in the realm of God's plan, purpose, and glory, reflecting the Lord Jesus Christ, drawing others to Him. It's never going to happen in the energy of the flesh. It isn't what we do, it's how we do it. It's why we do it. It is that Spirit-guided, Spirit-empowered, Spirit-defined life that makes us who we are.

And if we ever lose our sense of need, our craving for God's presence and God's power, we're done. We're going to be these that God leaves aside. Your name isn't going to be mentioned. "I will call My people by another name," a better name. And you remember one of the promises to the overcomers that Jesus says is, "You're going to have a new name." A new name. That's what we want. That's what we're after. That's what Paul is calling. "I am of Paul. I am of Apollos." You want that new name. Don't quibble and scrap in the world of human flesh. Look at what God has put before us. It ought to unite us. It ought to draw us together and bring us closer to God and closer to Christ.

Well, we'll pick up here next time. Let's close in a word of prayer. Father, thank You for the truth of Your Word. Thank You for the ministry of Your Spirit, His presence. What a gift we have in this age to have the ongoing, indwelling presence and power of Your Holy Spirit to activate Your Word in our souls, to lead us, to guide us, to communicate our prayers before Your throne, to communicate Your truth, Your answers, Your wisdom to us in words that cannot even be uttered by human speech. We pray that these things will make an impression on us and be memorable to us, that we'll see their pertinence and their applicability in the hours and the days ahead, that You will have Your perfect work in us to will and to do for Your good pleasure, and all to the glory of our Savior, the Lord Jesus. We pray these things in His name. Amen.