

March 30, 2014

Human Wisdom or God's Wisdom Understood And Live Out
Pastor Chuck Rains

Praying For People

And has not been here this week or last week. Now we find that she's gonna need surgery this Wednesday. So would you remember Diane, lady that used to, at times, sits behind Debbie over here? Susan, for the most part, tries to pick her up and get her here to church. Um, she's not in good health. She needs our prayer. There is a card for Diane out on the shelf in the hallway, and if you wanna sign it, we'll see that it gets to her. Some people have already signed it, but that would go a long way in encouraging. Remember Anna Blomstedt? She's in a lot of pain. Let's remember her. We don't know how long we'll have Zelda. Let's thank the Lord for her life and for the time we've had her. She's a precious, precious lady, and her life is in the Lord's hands. Ron and Marilyn are not stable on their feet, but they're receiving care at their home three days a week. I think they're staggered with a day in between, and then, of course, some family members come by as well. So remember Ron and Marilyn, and you could call them, you know, the telephone, by telephone, you could call. Maybe there's a possibility you could visit. I don't wanna suggest you just go over there. That wouldn't be kind. Make sure that if you plan to visit, you call ahead of time, schedule that visit, because they have a routine that they go through every day, and it's not kind to just walk in on people like that. But you could use the telephone, or you could schedule a time. Remember them, would you? Bill Hoke has an infection, I understand, in his foot, in his bone, even. I don't know how serious all that is. I wanna thank Chris Armano for visiting Bill. He's up at Heinz Veterans Hospital, and he's being treated up there. Just keep Bill in your prayers. So there are many to remember to the Lord. If you would, remember me. I'm not fully out of the woods.

Takes a whole lot to keep me from having the opportunity to come and preach the word of God. I tell you, that's a privilege that I don't take lightly, and I don't give it up if I can move. Debbie had a list of things that Dave Bauer left behind, a list of things said about pastors. Almost all the things on that list have been said to me at different times.

One was basically, you know so much in the word of God, you don't even have to study for your messages, do you? [audience laughing] That is so far from the truth, it is almost laughable. Who would dare stand up before people and really think that they're going to go through the word of God and try to teach people something, and not at least have had the time to look it over and study it and be sure that you're going to teach the truth? I know there are some that would do that, but what fools they are. And I'm sure that if there's any one of you that had to come up here and speak for half an hour or 45 minutes, you

would probably want to do a little study ahead of time. >> I'd be doing a lot of just reading. >> Yeah. >> And description. >> Yeah, well listen, keep me in your prayers. Keep Susan in your prayers. Keep Dan and Robin in your prayers. >> Yes, we will, and I want to give you a good happy note. Joey and Karis went out Friday night bowling and had just a great little time, so yeah. >> So he's up and going, he's up and around. >> Yep, him and Karis went bowling Friday night. >> He just had the time to get in. >> I don't want to know your score. >> No. (audience laughing) >> It's 140, but anyway. He's getting his fish line out of his arm April 4th. He's happy about that. >> Wonderful. Maybe he can build back some resistance in his body. >> Okay, let's pray.

Lord, what a precious privilege it is to come as a body together and to pray. Sometimes on Wednesday nights, sometimes on Saturday mornings when we pray, we have so few. I just have to say, I count these times on a Sunday morning, even in these moments of prayer as precious. We can join this body and come together at the throne and raise up these who are in special need. I think of Barb Reeves, Lord, and the grief that she and her mother Bev are going through now and the other family members having lost Ray. And I just thank you that Ray is with you, Lord. And he's waited a long time to be in your presence. Now I'm glad, Lord, that he can be there without pain. I thank you and pray that you give encouragement to the family. Help us be an encouragement to them. We do pray for Diane as she deals with this surgery and the broken arm and all the things that will be involved in healing. The same for Bill Hoke, Lord, with his, whatever this infection is, and his bone and his foot. I just pray that it would heal quickly and we could have him back with us here. In the case of Marilyn and Ron, we know that as they age and as their strength weakens, we can't expect them to return to where they were 10 years ago, but we do thank you for your strengthening their bodies and healing them and giving them joy each day. They have walked with you for lo these many years and Lord, they are precious in our sight. You have given them to us as very special gifts. And so you did with Zelda, Lord. For her family, she's been a special blessing, a singular gift from your hand. And for us, she's been that as well. We thank you. Praise you for all these folk that you would have us responsible to pray for. Help us to remember to pray for Anna Blomstedt as she rejoices with her undaunting spirit. Just wanna keep Dan and Robin before you, Lord, in the dark place where they serve. Keep Susan and the children safe until they return. Bring her home safely. We thank you for your bringing me home safely. Continue to do the work of repairing the body and pray.

Dealing With The Persuasive Words Of Human Wisdom

As we turn to your word, we ask that you make it clear to our minds. In Jesus' name, amen.

Open to 1 Corinthians 2, verse four. Let me read the first part of that verse. In my speech and my preaching, were not with persuasive words of human wisdom. I was going to, when I went through this section, I thought, well, I'm going to read those earlier verses as well. And I'm gonna let the people know that this is my attitude, my mind and my heart, in my preaching and teaching. And I went on with that for a while. And the Lord said, listen, this is not about you.

So that's why I began with verse four. My speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom. The emphasis here is on what they were not. You know, there are a lot of places where you go, where you hear very persuasive speeches built on human wisdom. I'm worried about our children that we send off to school. I think parents need to stay involved with their children always, every step of their education, from kindergarten on. Because children are exposed to the world's values and opinions about just everything that touches the moral spectrum. On whether it's normal and proper to have homosexual parents. You know, two mommies, two daddies. Whether in fact homosexuality itself is even acceptable. They start telling children in kindergarten that that's okay, that's normal. That's to be accepted.

Man can set his own rules on righteous, what is right and what's wrong, you know. That's what they tell them. Man can set his own rules. Are there moral absolutes? The world would say no. No, there are not. There are no absolutes of right and wrong. Unchanging truths? No, there are none. Expressions of unchanging nature, some creature, some being. Albeit God, is there really a God? They would tell these children. Don't look outside of yourself for such a thing. We can't speak of that here, they would tell them. They will hear nothing of an all-knowing, all-powerful, all-loving, life-giving, forgiveness-giving God. They will hear none of that. From kindergarten on, they're gonna be told that life is here and now. Life is not after our existence here, it's now.

That's all there is. (sighs) they'll never learn that they have to stand before God after they die, that God is their judge. An all-knowing God, but an all-loving God as well. Is there a creator God? Or are we the result of random chance? Man's wisdom would tell them, we're just the result of random chance that's been at work for multiplied, they used to say millions, you know? No, no, no, multiplied billions of years. Random chance has finally resulted in this glorious thing called a human being that gets to live here for 60, 70, 80 years and then is gone, of course, forever.

By the way, where I was just a couple of days ago, they think you come back as a cricket or a mouse or something. I was standing in the airport, ready to leave Bali, and I was looking around at the walls, there's great, great big paintings. They're not pictures, they're paintings of different kinds of cows. And I think, oh, those are interesting cows. There's a white cow and a brown cow and

a kind of a spotted cow. In my mind, they're not good and healthy looking cows, kind of a bony around the hips and big bellies, but nonetheless, there they were, washed and clean. And I'm thinking, isn't that sad? They've got these 10-foot wide, five-foot high paintings of cows all around this monstrous room. I have no idea, it might have been 20 of these things all the way around the room. And I just thought, well, they believe that the cow is sacred. And so in their airport, you don't see pictures of whatever, you know, you get pictures of cows. And how sad. Our great God Krishna is a blue creature. Kind of a silly looking blue creature. I don't know how they came up with that, but he's blue. You do see a statue with one arm lifted and one leg up in the air, and he's blue all over. That's Krishna. Billions and billions of years, they tell our children.

You know, the schools refuse to mention God on the humanistic belief that in our constitution, it is so written that any mention of God is wrong. That idea of the separation between church and state as a kind of way to define that phrase, that wasn't always the case, you know. It's only a feature of the 1900s, and I might say the last half of the century, really.

You know, there are some great speakers, even in pulpits, that use devices of psychology and building on crowd response to dynamic oratory and emotional responses that they try to bring the people along in with repeated phrases and words and responses and behavior, you know, might be clapping, it might be certain words that they get them to say, whatever, just they try to raise up an emotional and psychological response to human wisdom. They lead people to use the man speaking or the organization or the church, use that as their standard instead of God or his word.

The word of God is truth because it speaks of God. God is truth. God is truth, but his word is truth because it speaks accurately, and it is a revelation from his heart and mind to us about him and about his will and about his works. That's not the way we're supposed to speak human wisdom. The last part of that verse says, but in demonstration of the spirit and of power and you'll hear some men preach on that and they'll say, well, what that means is signs and gifts and miracles and prophetic utterances and special knowledge. Listen, God has used all of those things to establish his word. He has and to establish his church, but he's used those things to bring you back to his word and to him. It's when those things are held out for a people as the foundation of their reassurance of their faith that they get led astray.

You see, faith that's based or rests on such external things is a weak faith. I don't know if you see it that way, but I feel so sad for those who are led down that path. Their faith is weak. They're always seeking a new experience of some of those externals. They need assurance of their relationship with God and they think they get it through another experience of those external things. They want

to be sure of God's presence, of God's will and of God's blessing and they just think they need all of those physical external things to give them that.

Examining A Life Lived Out With God's Wisdom And Power

But those who demonstrate the indwelling person of the Holy Spirit in their lives, those who show out the power of God's working in their life as he changes them into Christ likeness, as they live out the fruit of the spirit, as they grow in their love for the Lord and for his word, as they surrender themselves through their hours and days to live out God's commands, God's counsels, God's guidance, they show the power of God at work in their lives. They show that because it's changing them. So when Paul says in demonstration of the spirit and the power, he's talking about the Holy Spirit working in lives by the power of God to change people into Christ likeness, giving them the power to live godly.

And they show that godliness out to the society around them and to the people around them and they back it up with the declaration of the gospel and the offer of salvation to the people around them. That's the demonstration of the power of God and the spirit of God. It's not simply because they have miracles going on or that they can talk in tongues or they've had a vision. How sad to be chained to such things.

First Corinthians 2.5, that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

Don't let your faith rest on the wisdom of men. What good is that? I don't care how fine a speaker somebody is or how well educated they are or how great an argument they can put forth. If it's not based on the truths of God's word, it's useless, it's empty. It'll come to nothing. God only works according to truth. [coughing] He only works according to what he tells you in his word. He'll never work contrary to this. He'll never set his word aside and work some other way. He is faithful to work according to his Word. By the spirit, changing you into Christ-likeness from step to step.

Second Corinthians 3, you know, 17, 18 there¹. So at 2.5, what should your faith be in? Should it be in the wisdom of men? God would say no. Should it be in the power of God? You can see God at work in you. You are not what you used to be if you are depending on the Lord, if you're obedient to the Lord, if you're walking in obedience to his word because you love him. Not because you have to. Not because he has a big stick over your head, but because you love him and you want to please him. And he's very dear to you. And he goes with you to help you every step of your way. And so you seek to please him with

¹ 2 Cor. 3:17 Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.
¹⁸ But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.

your life. You bring him along with you through your day. He's your number one friend. He's the one you talk with through the day. He's the one you talk with about everything. He wants you to talk with him about everything. He calls it prayer. In everything by prayer, in supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God.

Pray without ceasing.² What does that mean to you, pray without ceasing? What it means to me is just pray about everything. Talk with God about everything. You see, we're made so that we have a thought pattern going on in our mind. We have thoughts going on in our mind as we go through the day. I feel safe because the word of God backs us up on this. I can say this. I feel safe in saying that you don't just go along for one or two, three hours doing your whatever in your home and then suddenly you have a thought. You know, well, there comes a thought. Human beings are not like that. We have thoughts coming along all the time.

Of course, I've seen some studies that suggest to us that a lot of the stuff we're thinking about isn't so good. And depending on what stimuli we have around us, we may repeat the wrong kind of thinking over and over and over and over again, several times a minute. The world puts that thinking out in front of us. Satan is glad to pump the airwave full of the stuff that leads our minds away from God. (cups clinking) Do you really think Satan is out there saying, "Praise the Lord." (audience laughing) "Sing a hymn to Him." "Rejoice in the flowers." "Isn't that bird beautiful?" "Doesn't it make you think of angels?" You don't know Satan if you think any of that.

The power of God in an ongoing way, working in our lives, demonstrate to us that God is alive in us. And as you surrender to Him, it's conscious, it's deliberate, to let Him do His will, to let Him have His way with you, to let Him do all that He asks of you, to rest on the truth of His word, to obey it, to make it your standard for life, to buy up God's standards and make them yours, as you will let that process just become your way of thinking, bringing everything to Him, checking it out with Him, seeking only to do the stuff that pleases Him. Your love for Him will grow. You'll find yourself praising Him more. Quite naturally, you'll thank Him more. I know it's so small a thing.

Well, it's not small, really, but I determine when I receive Christ as my Savior, well, it wasn't right away, and I don't even know when it was, actually, but it was back there in my early days. As a Christian, I heard that you ought to give thanks to God for your food. Okay, that was interesting. I never had seen that at my house. I think about, let's see, about five months after I was saved, I went to a youth camp, and I saw these people at every meal, even breakfast, they prayed before they ate. Thank the Lord, somebody prayed. And then they kind of mentioned it from time to time. Everybody seemed to know that that was

² 1 Thess. 5:17

the rule, that God wants you to pray before you eat. Nobody questioned it. I thought, well, maybe that's the way Christians are supposed to act. So I guess I'll do that. I'll thank God every time I eat.

And as time went along, as months became years, and years became decades, I found that I got to the place where, if I took a bite of food, you know, in a meal or just a little snack, and I hadn't given thanks to God, I had to go back and ask His forgiveness and tell Him I really was thankful for it. The one I just ate, you know. That was a good bite of whatever, Lord, I thank You for it. But I tried to thank Him before I ate. I check it out, you know.

And I found that it should work with everything. If I'm gonna go into project, I'm gonna do something, I like to talk to Him about it beforehand instead of afterward. I do mention to Him, thank You, Lord, for getting me out of that accident I almost had, you know. But I think it's sometimes it's good to thank, to pray and bring these things up to Him, Lord, help me drive better. That gets a little touchy. Breaking men on things ahead of time. You know what I found out? You have to start changing your behavior. 'Cause if you pray ahead of time for God to help you drive, you know what? You have to slow down, you have to keep the rules, you have to drive like you ought to drive. Instead of driving the way you want to drive and you get home, well, thank you, Lord, I made it home. (audience laughing)

Talk with Him about it, you know, as you go into the thing and even before you practice it, bring Him along with you, let Him give you the blessing of letting your heart learn to yield to Him as you go through the things of life. Talk to Him about everything. And when you see Him doing something, when you see Him answering prayer, give Him praise. You know, you'll begin to rest your hope on His promises in His Word.

As somebody recently was, they didn't ask me this question, but they asked somebody else. "Why is it that Chuck is constantly bringing up "the latter days and the return of the Lord "and he's always talking about time is short "and boy, we better get ready for Jesus to come." This has been going on for centuries, people talking like this. And here we got one right here with us, talks that way. Yeah, that's what you're gonna have to deal with when you have me around, I guess. 'Cause I believe God's Word. I believe His time is coming is near. It's not my opinion, I really believe that's what He tells me. And I cannot tell you anything else. I have to tell you what He says. Who can receive the wisdom that comes from God? From God's Word, who can receive it?

Well, chapter two, verse six says, " however, we speak wisdom among those who are mature."³ Are you mature? "Yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of

³ "However, we speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing." NKJV

the rulers of this age who are coming to nothing. Who can receive this wisdom from God? Well, those that are mature.” Now, do you think that mature means you're perfect without a flaw? Well, look around you. I get to see your faces. I have to tell you, none of you people are perfect without a flaw. I know, I know you're gonna take issue with me maybe, but you're not. And if you're looking this way and you think that you got one up here that is, you're wrong. But we can be mature. We can be full of age, you know, come to have come to full age, where we can receive that which is for those who have lost their mind, left childhood behind, who are serious about letting God speak to them, who are, you know, have laid the foundations and have built on the foundations of God's word and are now reaping the results of a better understanding of his word because all the foundations are there. And they're in agreement with them. They're letting all that God is saying in his word speak to them.

If I try to teach you some things and you have not grown beyond the basics, what I have to say to you may sound like, well, a lot of the language I was listening to for the last couple of weeks. All I could do was stand there and smile. (audience laughing) I had no idea what they were saying. Sometimes they would, you know, throw their arm out at me or point at something and say something. And I got an idea, they weren't happy with me about something. And then I would try to correct my behavior. I didn't know what they wanted. One lady's chicken ran into Robin and Dan's yard. He's crawling under the fence and ran in there. It was small enough, it was a little chicken, got under the fence. The mother hen couldn't get in that way. So she was squawking outside the fence and this little chicken was running along, you know, inside. And the lady that the chicken belonged to was kind of upset because her chicken was not coming out of there. And I was just standing in the yard looking at it and she was saying something to me, waving her arms. And I felt, you know, apparently she thought I was guilty about something. It's good to know the language, people. But in that case, folks, I tell you, I was innocent. I didn't have anything to do with that chicken coming in that yard. And I didn't want it to stay there anyway.

But when God speaks from his word, you should be able to understand it. It should make sense to you. You should just drink it up and say, you know, I love this. He's speaking to me. And I love somebody coming to me and bringing the word of God to me in such a way that I can grow in my understanding. Somebody that can speak to me beyond just the basics. Somebody that can challenge me to let God do a greater work in me. The wisdom of this age, 2.6. We speak to wisdom among those who are mature. Not the wisdom of this age, not the rulers of this age who are coming to nothing. We speak the wisdom of God. How do we do it?

Verse seven, "But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery."

Now that has caused a lot of Christians to really get upset. Finally, I decided I really want to know the wisdom of God. Now you're gonna give it to me in a mystery. Well, a mystery in this language means something that's not fully disclosed. And he even uses this parallel phrase with this. He says, "The hidden wisdom." Hidden wisdom. "Which God ordained before the ages for our glory." Now we're getting a clue about what he's talking about. Hidden wisdom. Ordained before the ages. That means it was in God's mind and God's will alone first. It means God had a plan. God had a plan before he created. And God's will, will come to pass. I remember Jesus on the Mount of Olives, he was descending, you know, and the Pharisees, scribes of Pharisees, they told him, "Have your followers be quiet." 'Cause they were saying, "Hosanna to the son of David. "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord. "Hosanna in the highest." Have them be quiet for saying such things. And Jesus said, "If these should be quiet. - The very stones would cry out. -"⁴ The very stones would cry out. And you say, "What? "The very stones would cry out? "Is that just some poetic statement?" No, because in the Old Testament, it was prophesied, Isaiah, that those words would be spoken. And if the people weren't gonna say them, because God said they're gonna be spoken, they're in his plan, he wanted them spoken. If the people wouldn't do it, God would have the rocks do it. But it was going to be done. God had a plan. He was going to bring it about on the earth. And it's called the hidden wisdom.

But we know a lot about it. We know that his plan was that the Son of God had to leave heaven, come to this earth, and be born as a human being. He had to live a righteous life without sin. He had to live a life of love, never erring in love. He had to do all his Father's will, both in what he would have him say, every last word, and what he would have him do, every last deed. Every last word and deed was according to the will of God. And that having done all the will of God, he would have to willingly offer up his life as a sacrifice for all of mankind. He would have to take the sin of all of mankind upon himself, as Peter says, in his own body on the tree. And offering himself up to be nailed to a tree like the serpent in Numbers 21, that Moses put on a stake outside the cave. He put a stake outside the camp. And he says in John 3, you know, if I be lifted up as Moses lifted up the serpent of the wilderness, if I be lifted up, I will draw men unto me. Doesn't mean they'll all be saved. Means they will have, all of them will have one to look at that would heal them of their sin, if they would come. He is the only offering. Having died to redeem mankind, God's plan was that he would by his blood make that offering before the father. And the father would then judge whether he was righteous or not. And should he find him to be righteous, that the father would raise him from the dead before the fourth day. And openly display him in victory over the grave, 1 Corinthians 15. That was the plan of God before the ages.

⁴ Lk. 19:28-40

It's called the mystery. Undisclosed, except to those whose hearts have been opened up as they have put their faith in Jesus, all of these things make sense now. And so when I speak to you about this hidden wisdom, about Jesus and about all that he has done, it makes sense to you. But I want you to read verse eight. "Which none of the rulers of this age knew. Which none of the rulers of this age knew. For had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. If human beings, if mankind, if the world had understood the plan of God for redemption, they would not have killed Jesus." Why? Because they would suddenly realize that redemption was a good thing and they should, you know, and they shouldn't be doing what they were doing.

No, if they didn't kill Jesus, there would be no redemption. That's what it means. They would not have participated in the deeds that were necessary in order to bring about our redemption, our salvation. Satan would not have agreed to do those things because he does not want you to have a savior. He thought he had victory, but he had no victory.

Christ had the victory over the grave and over sin and over hell. And those who have received him see this plan. But the rulers of this age, everybody that is not in touch with God, everybody that doesn't have the spirit of God, everybody that is only reasoning according to human reasoning, cannot understand this.

Read in 2 Corinthians 3. It tells you about the Jews have a veil over their hearts today. Even today, it says in reading of the law, they can't understand it. Because the veil is done away in Christ. When you receive Jesus, the veil is lifted, the mystery, the curtain goes up, and you start being able to see things you could never see before. I enjoy looking at the rich truths that God has given to us who have received Christ and bless his name.

Father, thank you for your word. Thank you for those of you who have been in the church for a long time. Thank you for those that have received Christ. Help us be willing to speak of your salvation and of your love and of your desires for each person, each boy and each girl to come to you and to know you, Lord Jesus, as our savior, so that you can raise the curtain and help them see that you're a part of all this world and all of this life. And they need to talk with you about everything and bring you in onto every part of their lives and let you change them to make them over so that they're more and more like Jesus. Thank you, Lord Jesus, in your precious name, amen.