

Friends of the Chapel Weekly Scripture Study

Fifth Sunday After the Epiphany

February 8, 2026

Old Testament Reading

English Standard Version Scripture Text

¹⁸ For the word of the cross is ^bfolly to ^cthose who are perishing, but to us ^dwho are being saved it is ^ethe power of God. ¹⁹ For it is written,

^f“I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,

and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.”

²⁰ ^gWhere is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? ^hHas not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? ²¹ For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach² to save those who believe. ²² For ⁱJews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, ²³ but we preach Christ ⁱcrucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, ²⁴ but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ ^kthe power of God and ^lthe wisdom of God. ²⁵ For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

²⁶ For consider your calling, brothers: ^mnot many of you were wise according to worldly standards,³ not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. ²⁷ But ⁿGod chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; ^oGod chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; ²⁸ God chose what is low and despised in the world, even ^pthings that are not, to ^qbring to nothing things that are, ²⁹ so ^rthat no human being⁴ might boast in the presence of God. ³⁰ And because of him⁵ you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us ^swisdom from God, ^trighteousness and ^usanctification and ^vredemption, ³¹ so that, as it is written, ^w“Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.”

Historical Context

Isaiah 58 addresses the problem of empty religious observance among the returned exiles. The people fast and seek God outwardly, yet neglect justice and mercy. The prophet confronts superficial piety and calls for authentic covenant faithfulness.

Verse-by-Verse Exegetical Commentary

Verse 3 – The people complain that God does not notice their fasting, revealing a transactional view of worship.

Verse 4 – Their fasting is accompanied by oppression and conflict, contradicting covenant obedience.

Verse 5 – True fasting is not merely outward humility but inward transformation.

Verses 6–7 – The LORD defines acceptable fasting: loosening injustice, sharing bread, clothing the naked.

Verses 8–9a – Obedient righteousness results in restoration, healing, and answered prayer.

Theological Themes

- Authentic versus superficial worship
- Justice and mercy as covenant obedience
- Divine response to true repentance
- Holiness expressed in social righteousness

Epistle Reading

1 Corinthians 2:1–12, 13–16

English Standard Version Scripture Text

And I, when I came to you, brothers,¹ ^xdid not come proclaiming to you ^ythe testimony² of God with lofty speech or wisdom. ² For I decided to know nothing among you except ^zJesus Christ and him crucified. ³ And ^aI was with you ^bin weakness and in fear and much trembling, ⁴ and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of ^cthe Spirit and of power, ⁵ so that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men³ but ^din the power of God.

Wisdom from the Spirit

⁶ Yet among ^ethe mature we do impart wisdom, although it is not ^fa wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, ^gwho are doomed to pass away. ⁷ But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, ^hwhich God decreed before the ages for our glory. ⁸ None of ⁱthe rulers of this age understood this, for ^jif they had, they would not have crucified ^kthe Lord of glory. ⁹ But, as it is written,

^l“What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has ^mprepared ⁿfor those who love him”—

¹⁰ these things ^oGod has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even ^pthe depths of God. ¹¹ For who knows a person’s thoughts ^qexcept

the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. ¹² Now ^rwe have received not ^sthe spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. ¹³ And we impart this ^tin words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, ^uinterpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual.⁴

¹⁴The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are ^vfolly to him, and ^whe is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. ¹⁵ The ^xspiritual person judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one. ¹⁶ ^y“For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?” But ^zwe have the mind of Christ.

Historical Context

In 1 Corinthians 2, Paul continues addressing the Corinthian fascination with eloquence and worldly wisdom. He emphasizes that his proclamation centered on Christ crucified and that true understanding comes through the revelation of the Spirit.

Verse-by-Verse Exegetical Commentary

Verses 1–2 – Paul deliberately avoids rhetorical flourish, resolving to know only Christ crucified.

Verses 3–5 – Weakness and fear highlight dependence upon the Spirit rather than human persuasion.

Verses 6–8 – God’s hidden wisdom, once concealed, is revealed in the crucified Lord of glory.

Verses 9–12 – The Spirit reveals what God has prepared, granting believers insight into divine grace.

Verses 13–16 – Spiritual truths are discerned spiritually; believers possess the mind of Christ.

Theological Themes

- The centrality of Christ crucified
- Divine wisdom revealed through the Spirit
- Dependence on spiritual discernment
- The mind of Christ

Concluding Reflection

On the Fifth Sunday After the Epiphany, the Church is reminded that true worship flows from hearts transformed by grace. Isaiah calls for justice and mercy as the evidence of authentic devotion. Paul proclaims that divine wisdom is revealed not through eloquence, but through the cross and the Spirit's illumination. Together these readings call believers to humble obedience and Spirit-shaped understanding.