

I AM THANKFUL FOR...

Jesus' wisdom, *Colossians 2:1-3*

How often do you struggle to know what to do? The multi-billion-dollar industry of 'knowledge influencers' focusing on things like self-help books and YouTube tutorials indicates that question offers more than a hypothetical scenario. The money and time devoted to those who seem to have answers evidences our recognition that we need wisdom, that we need guidance and knowledge to know what to do. That same need drives the Bible's story, which traces the failures of pursuing wisdom on one's own rather than finding it in God (*Genesis 3*).

The apostle Paul wrote that thankfulness occupies an essential place in a Christian's identity (*cf. Philippians 4:6; Colossians 4:2; 1 Thessalonians 5:18*). Motivated by that character and the Thanksgiving holiday, we have been using our Sundays this month to explore reasons we should be thankful. This lesson concludes the series by using the struggle to know what to do to focus us on another incentive for our thankfulness:

I am thankful for Jesus' wisdom.

"All the treasures of wisdom and knowledge"¹

- God created humans to rule, to manage His creation as His representatives (*Genesis 1:26-28*).
- Ruling requires wisdom. It involves knowing the difference between good and bad and making choices faithful to one's purpose.
- Rather than looking to God for wisdom and trusting what He said, humans sought to circumvent Him and seize wisdom for themselves (*Genesis 3:1-6*).
- However, the Bible reveals that wisdom cannot be found separate from God because respectful submission to Him is "the beginning of wisdom" (*Proverbs 1:1-7*).
- In the Hebrew Bible, God's wisdom expresses itself primarily through His covenant laws (*Deuteronomy 4:6; 10:12-13; Proverbs 1:1-7*).
- His laws had a clear purpose – to teach Israel how to organize and conduct themselves in the world as His image-bearers (*cf. Exodus 19:5-6; 20:7; Genesis 1:26-28*).
- However, God's covenant was a temporary measure; He designed it to prepare people for Jesus (*Jeremiah 31:31-34; Galatians 3:21-26*).
- God's wisdom finds its fullest expression in Jesus, who possesses "all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (*Colossians 2:9*).

¹Colossians 2:3. All quotes from the Bible come from *The Holy Bible, English Standard Version* (ESV Permanent Text Edition, Crossway, 2016) unless otherwise noted.



- Jesus marks an important transition in God’s wisdom – God no longer locates wisdom in a tree or a law but in Jesus’ life and teachings. **Wisdom is a person rather than a thing.**
- God hides “all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” in Jesus because Jesus is God, creator, and the head of the church (*Colossians 1:15-20*).
- Jesus shares his wisdom with us – he fills us as He is filled with “the whole fullness of deity” (*Colossians 2:9-10*).
- Jesus embodies God’s wisdom in his life and teachings, showing us how to live in the world. Consider the insights into Jesus’ wisdom offered in the Sermon on the Mount (*Matthew 5-7*), the long section of teaching Matthew places at the beginning of his gospel to introduce and summarize Jesus’ ministry.
 - Jesus’ wisdom allows him to speak with authority (*Matthew 7:28-29*).
 - Even though his wisdom allows him to speak authoritatively, Jesus does not dismiss previous expressions of God’s wisdom. Instead, he announced that he is the filter through which one properly understands God and His will (*Matthew 5:17-19; 7:12*).
 - Jesus’ wisdom emphasizes attitudes and motives rather than just actions (*cf. Matthew 5:21-6:18*).
 - Jesus’ wisdom focuses on God’s kingdom, on restoring respectful submission to God that properly enthrones Him over His creation (*cf. Matthew 6:9-10*).
 - Jesus’ wisdom “astonished” people because it takes paths overlooked or rejected by the world even while operating within the familiar boundaries of God’s Law-of-Moses wisdom (*Matthew 7:13-14; 5:17; cf. 1 Corinthians 1:8-30; Matthew 5:43-48*).

Applications

- Jesus’ wisdom gives us all we *need* but does not give us everything we *want*.
- We must learn to trust Jesus’ wisdom.
- Trust comes through practice; we discover the blessings of Jesus’ wisdom as we live by it.
- Jesus’ wisdom centers on relationships rather than abstractions.
- Jesus wants us to utilize his wisdom for the good of others rather than for our benefit.

I pray that God help us seek Jesus’ wisdom rather than our own understanding. I pray that our encounters with Jesus’ wisdom will develop a deep thankfulness in us that motivates our growing obedience to Him.

