

# Sermon Notes

## *Spiritual & Immature*

1 Corinthians 2:14-3:4

March 8, 2015

### **Introduction**

This passage is a call to maturity. This is both a warning and an invitation. It's a look in the mirror. A wake-up call, a watch-out and a "take heed." Along with this call to maturity, we will see some of what needs to be pursued as well as some of what we need to stop doing. The Corinthians are a distinctive people and they are addressed as such. They are of Christ...and they are supposed to act like it.

### **Different Terms, Different People**

1 Corinthians 2:14 refers to "the natural man" (ψυχικός) and 2:15 refers to those who "are spiritual" (πνευματικός). There is some confusion swirling about these terms. This is because people tend to use these words in ways that Paul is *not* using them here. These terms are used in contrast to each other. These are different types of people. The "natural man" is the non-Christian (those without the life-giving and guiding presence of the Holy Spirit), and the "spiritual" is the Christian.

*1 Corinthians 2:14—three things about the "natural"*

(1) Does not accept/receive; (2) Considers this foolishness; (3) Cannot receive/understand

Paul addresses the Corinthians as "spiritual", that is, as those who have the Spirit of God...

*Having this read out loud...*

The Apostle explains the effect of the Holy Spirit, which enables discernment to occur, and he quotes from Isaiah regarding the mind of the Lord; applying all of this to the Corinthian Christians: "and we have the mind of Christ" (2:16).

Hearing this read out loud would have sounded rather familiar to those who were breathing the rarified air of "superior knowledge", understanding, "wisdom", and speech. This must have seemed like a pretty good fit.

The problem is, Paul is *not* complimenting them. Paul is giving them a warning and a rather direct rebuke. They have gotten lazy while they are (thinking and) acting as if they had arrived. Paul points out who they are and what is expected of them: they are "spiritual" and ought to be growing. However, they are "spiritual" and they are immature.

Paul speaks of them as belonging to Christ. They are "brethren", "babes", and "babes *in Christ*" (3:1). Paul does not call them "natural." He (intentionally and carefully) uses a different word. He refers to them as "carnal" or "fleshly", using a term which indicate that they are looking a lot like those who do not have the Spirit.

When Paul first came to them, and they were babies in Christ, they were treated like babes in Christ. That was then, and that was fine and appropriate for baby treatment. When you are a baby, it's okay to act like a baby.

*Note: All things "baby" are not always bad or a problem...*

1 Peter 2:2—we are to be like newborn babes in our desire for the Word.

Luke 18:17—we are to be like little children in our reception of the kingdom of God.

1 Corinthians 14:20—we are to be babies in evil.

However, Paul is concerned that the Corinthians were *still* acting like babies: "and even now you are still not able" (3:2b). They were unable to receive solid food/solid teaching. There are similar passages: Hebrews 5:10-14; 2 Peter 1:5-11. Their rivalries and squabbles were demonstrating their immaturity. When they were doing this, they were acting like those who did not have the Spirit; they were acting like "mere men" (3:3).

These envies and rivalries contradict who we are in the Gospel, make us look laughable, and distract us from the battle at hand.

*Why bring up envy and divisions again?*

*Where do we need to be addressed?*

*What immaturities need to be dealt with so that we may grow up?*

### **The Scriptures & Solid Food**

According to 1 Corinthians 14:20 we are to be children in malice, but we *are not* to be children in our understanding. The Christian life is not all and only about the understanding, but we must understand that we are not to dismiss the understanding. The Scriptures have been given so that we may grow up. The Scriptures unveil the "things of God" (2:11), the "deep things of God" (2:10), and are the "solid food" (3:2). Scripture saturation is essential for our growth. The cause of so much stagnation among many who bear the name of Christ is connected to the neglect of Scripture.

### **Some Concluding Thoughts**

