In the first passage that we read earlier, we continue to hear from Paul addressing his concerns of unity within the early church in Corinth...a church that was deeply divided over their allegiance of faith, the authority of the governing body, and their sense of belonging. As we read from our passage from the previous week, the church in Corinth was struggling with internal disputes, quarrels, competitions, boasting of one’s own accomplishments, and claiming superiority over one another, especially among those who have been before and those who were considered “newcomers”. The community was deeply divided over trivial matters while accusing the wrongs of the others. They were NOT functioning and treating one another as a body of Christ, in preserving the peace and unity of the church.

 Paul, who was an outsider, heard of such quarrels among the church whom he loved, wrote out of his concerns and tried to mediate this internal dispute among the church while making clear that he was by no means claiming his own authority and wisdom over them. He surrendered his total authority to the Spirit of unity while calling for all disputed parties to humbly examine their own lives and model the lives upon the humility of Christ. He called for all parties to put their own personal interests aside and focused on the collaborative work of the ministry. Paul preached that the crucified Christ was their greatest common denominator and certainly NOT the basis of their disunity and quarrel among the body of Christ.

 Through his letter, Paul pleaded to the church that they ought to prayerfully seek God’s wisdom first and not upon our own human knowledge and understanding. Paul identified how our faith often clashes with the influence and interests of the world. According to Paul, the rules of our faith in Christ shall be different from the standards of the world we live in. In other word, we the community of faith, shall strive to have the same mind in Christ through the unity of the Spirit, and not according to our own human standard or wisdom. That’s what make us different from the secular organizations, institutions or political bodies.

 In beginning of our text today in verse 1, Paul made reference to this “mystery” of God in the *New Revised Standard Version*. But what IS this “mystery” of God?? Is this some secret hidden information that only a selected “inner circle” group of people come to know? Well, yes and no. The term “mystery” is derived term out of the Greek word (*mysterion*), which in some translations, translated as “witness” or “testimony”. So Paul was talking about **God’s witness** **and testimony** through Christ’s earthy mission for humanity. Such “mystery” is beyond our human comprehension. We could only know by what God reveals to us…just as we read from last week’s passage, that even *“God’s foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God’s weakness is stronger than human strength”.[[1]](#footnote-1)* Here, Paul was claiming that the mystery (or the witness and testimony) of God rests upon the humble and sacrificial work of Christ on the cross. That’s what our ultimate motivation be.

 Subsequently God reveals this very same knowledge upon us through the witnesses and testimonies of our faith, upon those whose knowledge has yet been revealed. That’s OUR work and the ministry of OUR faith that God has entrusted us with.

 But Paul did not just stop there, he went on to challenge his fellow believers and ministry co-workers concerning their role and responsibility upon receiving such knowledge and wisdom from God. *“What are YOU going to do about it?”* Paul challenged the early church (and for us today as well). It’s not enough that we inherit such mystery and knowledge of Christ, we have a calling to share this very same testimony or witness with others, through our everyday living, our speech, and our overall attitude in living up to our faith proclaimed. The same Spirit of unity that conquers our differences also brings about new life and new faith in others, as we strive to achieve the same mind with Christ and with one another.

 Similarly as we read in our Gospel lesson from Matthew earlier, Jesus also challenged his followers to live according to their faith and be **the Salt of the earth and the light of the world!** To be the salt of the earth means that we may draw out the taste and bring out the best flavor of God, so others may come and taste[[2]](#footnote-2) the goodness of God.

 I believe Salt in the Jewish culture, symbolizes the covenant that is made between two parties, especially in a relationship such as a marriage. The Arabic word for “salt” is the same as the word for a “union”, a “pact” or a “treaty”.[[3]](#footnote-3) So in other word, to be the salt of the earth, we are to develop and build a lasting relationship with others.

Through the metaphor of salt, Jesus was telling us that **we have the capacity to** **transform lives by the way we experience our relationships with God, as well as others.** Like Salt, we can be this external force that affect lasting change internally upon others. When one comes to having the same “mind of Christ”, as Paul was referring to earlier, we come to experience the oneness of the Spirit of God and NOT the spirit of the world.[[4]](#footnote-4)

So what does this all mean? It means that **we ought to listen attentively to the Spirit from above and not of our own or of the world** that often leads us astray and divides us. We shall reflect the light of Christ into this world that is so desperately in need of the Spirit’s leading.

 Jesus said, “**You are the Light of the world**” because many are still lost in the darkness of this world…lost not necessarily in a physical sense but in a spiritual sense. Many are living in a world of brokenness or are trapped in the darkness of sins and depravities of freedom. Many find themselves trapped and unable to find their way out in an often desperate and hopeless situation. They need this light of Christ that would illuminate them into the path of righteousness and holiness.

As the prophet Isaiah reminded upon his people, we are to be a light to the world by exemplifying ourselves through our actions and in our lives. Jesus challenged his disciples to be the citizens of ***“a city on a hill that cannot be hidden”.*** This means we are to let God shine through us, by reflecting Christ’s light to others, even if we may be singled out to be different in the midst of a crowd.

As we were reminded last week by the prophet Micah, at times our situation may call upon us to take a stand upon our faith ***“a city on a hill that cannot be hidden”.*** We must be willing to ***seek justice, to love mercy and to walk humbly with our God.*** This is all part of our calling today to be Christ’s disciples to be the salt of the earth and the light to the world.

 Furthermore, as the Apostle Paul also reminded us “*not to be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God-- what is good and acceptable and perfect. 3 For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned.”[[5]](#footnote-5)*

 By the virtue of our baptism, Jesus has held His disciples and to all of us today accountable to a higher standard. Jesus has set the bar high for all of us to strive for, such that we “***shall love the Lord our God with all our heart, and with all our soul, and with all our strength, and with all our mind; and [finally, love] your neighbor as yourself."[[6]](#footnote-6)***

 When we share the same mind with Christ, we obediently follow the leading of Christ and his commands for us, and not of our own. Our faith ought not rest upon our human wisdom, but on the power of God.[[7]](#footnote-7) We put on our own spiritual lens in seeing the needs of others first, as we inspire change of the human heart in the lives of others.

 No one can comprehend God, but through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, believers have insight into some of God’s plans, thoughts, and actions – they, in fact, have the “mind of Christ.” Through the Holy Spirit, we can begin to know God’s thoughts, talk with God, and expect God’s answers to our prayers, through our intimate relationship with him. The question is, are we spending enough time with Christ to have this very mind in us?[[8]](#footnote-8) Even though this was given to us freely, through the grace of God, we must put in our share of the effort in achieving this union mind with Christ.

Until that day, **let us strive to be wise through the teaching of the Spirit, and NOT through the teachings of the world, and certainly NOT of our own.** Let us share in union, the mind of Christ with others, in accordance to the promises that God had made with us, and NOT by our own human efforts and personal achievements. It is then and only then, when we may achieve the same mind with Christ. To God be the glory, in the name of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, Amen.

1. *I Corinthians 1:25* [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. *Psalm 34:8* [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. *http://www.truthortradition.com/articles/what-is-the-covenant-of-salt-i-have-seen-in-weddings* [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. *I Corinthians 2:10-11* [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. *Romans 12:2-3* [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. *Luke 10:27(Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18)* [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. *I Corinthians 2:5* [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. *Life Application Study Bible, 1997 P.2065* [↑](#footnote-ref-8)