

**“Jesus the Savvy”, Rev. Shelley Kral**

Col 2:3, Lu 20:27-44

May 31, 2020

Good Morning –

Have you ever done something stupid? Something where afterwards you say to yourself, “What was I thinking?”

Maybe you were down two strikes and swung at a pitch above your head? All the way back to the dugout...why did I do that?

Maybe you’ve sabotaged yourself by saying something you knew you shouldn’t say? You kept telling yourself, “Don’t say it, don’t say it, don’t say it” – then you say it and you end up regretting you ever said it?

Or have you ever had an experience where you said “I did not see that coming.” You take a sincere course of action, then events play out differently than you thought; you think to yourself, how did I not see that coming?

You made some decisions at work that you thought were the right ones but they came back to bite you and when you walked through it with hindsight you were amazed you didn’t see that coming?

I remember falling for a phone scam once and when I was explaining later what happened I felt so stupid, because it seemed so obvious I was being scammed when I looked at it from that angle, but at the time, I just didn’t see it. I trusted that the people were telling the truth, I was so naïve.

One of the reasons I admire Jesus; one of the reasons why I trust him more than I trust me; one of the reasons I follow him and am dedicating myself to learning to put into practice the things he does is because Jesus never had that issue. He never did something then said to himself afterward:

Ugh! What was I thinking?

Ugh! How did I not see that coming?

Ugh! Wish I’d thought that through more!

Never! Because Jesus is the most savvy person who has ever lived.

And he was able to be the savviest person who has ever lived because of two main things:

1. He was the smartest, most insightful person who has ever lived
2. He always used his intelligence in the right way, at the right time, for the right reasons

Look at his life and see it! He was savvy in accomplishing his purpose: **to help us understand the nature of God and he enacted God’s plan to heal the world and bring it back to the way it was supposed to be.**

1. Jesus was the smartest, most insightful person who has ever lived on earth.

Col 2:3 describes Jesus Christ as the one “in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.”

Think about that for a minute.

In Jesus *are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.*

If you were to list the top 3-5 things you think of when you think of Jesus, would this be on your list?

Would you write down – smartest man in every way who ever lived?

Most of us wouldn't. We might say he was the smartest man when it came to religious things; MAYBE even philosophical things.

But that isn't what the text says – it says that in Jesus Christ are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge...without qualifiers!

That means the knowledge and insight that's being spoken of includes physical as well as spiritual things.

Which I guess you'd have to have if you were going to create the universe – which Scripture says he did.

Col 1:16 For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him.

Heb 1:2 but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe.

Think about the kind of grasp you'd have on physics and engineering if you created the universe.

How well you would understand the elements of design and beauty if you made sunsets and what apprehension of the human heart you would need to come up with spoken and unspoken language.

Only a master scientist, artist, storyteller, thinker, musician, could do it.

And yet we don't readily think of Jesus in this way do we?

We don't think about Jesus being an expert at what we may call earthy things. But if in him are the treasures of all wisdom and knowledge – then he must be – or at least could have been if he wanted to be.

Ever notice in the gospels how Jesus always spoke correctly about any field mentioned?

He knew what he was talking about when it came to construction, agriculture, architecture, taxes, politics, war, business.

He could have mastered any good work humans are capable of doing. He could have worked for your company, doing what you do. What would that be like – for Jesus to be part of your team, be your employee or your manager?

Think of the help he would be! And yet, we rarely ask him for help with our work do we? Rarely ask him for help solving a problem, creating a solution. Maybe we should change that?

Jesus was the greatest thinker, the smartest person, who ever lived – and he always used that wisdom, that knowledge perfectly!

2. He always used his intelligence, applied his insight in the right way, at the right time, for the right reasons:

**To help us understand the nature of God as he enacted God’s plan to heal the world and bring it back to the way it was supposed to be**

Look at Luke 20:27-44 and notice how Jesus handles the entire situation – how he handles the people.

<sup>27</sup> There came to him some Sadducees, those who deny that there is a resurrection, <sup>28</sup> and they asked him a question, saying, “Teacher, Moses wrote for us that if a man’s brother dies, having a wife but no children, the man must take the widow and raise up offspring for his brother. <sup>29</sup> Now there were seven brothers. The first took a wife, and died without children. <sup>30</sup> And the second <sup>31</sup> and the third took her, and likewise all seven left no children and died. <sup>32</sup> Afterward the woman also died. <sup>33</sup> In the resurrection, therefore, whose wife will the woman be? For the seven had her as wife.”

<sup>34</sup> And Jesus said to them, “The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage, <sup>35</sup> but those who are considered worthy to attain to that age and to the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage, <sup>36</sup> for they cannot die anymore, because they are equal to angels and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection. <sup>37</sup> But that the dead are raised, even Moses showed, in the passage about the bush, where he calls the Lord the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob. <sup>38</sup> Now he is not God of the dead, but of the living, for all live to him.” <sup>39</sup> Then some of the scribes answered, “Teacher, you have spoken well.” <sup>40</sup> For they no longer dared to ask him any question.

<sup>41</sup> But he said to them, “How can they say that the Christ is David’s son? <sup>42</sup> For David himself says in the Book of Psalms,

“ ‘The Lord said to my Lord,  
“Sit at my right hand,

<sup>43</sup> until I make your enemies your footstool.” ’

<sup>44</sup> David thus calls him Lord, so how is he his son?”

Dallas Willard, who was Dean of Philosophy at U Southern California (as well as a Baptist Minister) in his book *The Great Omission* points out a few logic moves Jesus makes here that are simply brilliant, I’m gonna let his teaching guide us here...

The Sadducees are a religious group who are known for rejecting the idea of resurrection so they, propose a scenario to Jesus that aims to trip Jesus up on this area that they consider themselves experts in... they are trying to use logic to prove that resurrection can't be true.

So they use a type of law given by Moses known as Levirate Law. It said if a married man died without children, his next oldest brother should marry his widow and any children they have will inherit in the line of the first husband. In their hypothetical case the woman goes through 7 brothers without having children and then – unsurprisingly – dies.

Surely, they believe, this shows the absurdity of the resurrection because if that were true she would be the wife of all of them, which was assumed to be impossible given the nature of marriage.

Jesus responds by pointing out that while humans will have bodies in the resurrection there will be some qualitative differences between those bodies and the bodies we have now... we won't have bodies that engage in marriage and baby making and will be made of stuff that can't die.

In that way we will be more like angels.

Basically, Jesus undermines assumptions of the Sadducees. He says – you don't know what you're talking about, but I know what I'm talking about. He goes on to teach them about the nature of God.

Then watch this: it's brilliant:

He takes a concept the Sadducees accept:

That God appeared to Moses at the burning bush and described himself as the God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob.

He then points out to them that when God said that, Abraham and Isaac and Jacob had all been dead a very long time.

But God is not God of the dead... a dead person can't be in covenant relationship with him – where the person is loving and serving God and God is maintaining faithful love to the person. God doesn't commune with people who don't exist, or are dead.

Jesus destabilizes their entire argument – but he doesn't stop there... he then presents a puzzle of his own for them to draw them into seeing him as the Messiah.

He uses Psalm 110 to point out an apparent contradiction about the Messiah – that the Messiah is a descendant of David (which they all agreed on) and yet, David calls the Messiah his Lord!

Why would David call his descendant his Lord?

Jesus is hoping they will catch on and see that the Messiah is not only the son of David, but also one higher than David – that he isn't just to be king of Israel but king of all – that being Messiah is about more than just being head of the Jewish nation.

You may say to yourself at this point – if that is what Jesus meant, why doesn't he just come out and say it? Why does Jesus use puzzles, use parables, metaphors and allusions? Why doesn't he just tell us straight out?

### **Because he is Jesus the Savvy!**

Jesus' goal isn't to win an argument with the Sadducees, his goal is to win the Sadducees.

Jesus is using his intelligence not to win arguments with people but to win the hearts of people.

And he knows people.

And he knows that we respond differently when we exert effort and come to things on our own.

He makes us work for it, so that we really own it.

Jesus is giving the chance to achieve understanding, to have insight into the nature of God, to those who are willing to exert effort, because only if your willing to exert effort, willing to put some skin in the game, will real change, inside change, soul, change – happen.

And that's what he wants – for us to come away different people.

This is what is meant by the saying: “Grace is opposed to earning not effort.”

earning is an attitude, Effort is an action,

God is opposed to us thinking we earn his grace

God is not opposed to us making an effort to live out of his grace.

Just the opposite. Jesus forces us to exert effort in understanding him, in understanding God because he's So SAVVY!

He engages with us in ways that will change us not for a season, not superficially – but for a life time – deep down. So he forces us, for our own sake, to exert some effort.

When Jon and I were first dating he was telling me about why he became a Christian. He talked about looking into Islam and Mormonism and other religions, but when he looked into Christianity and came across Jesus, he said – “I fell in love.” I fell in love with Jesus.

It kind of startled me. I had never heard anyone put it that way before.

But I got it; and I get it.

Jesus was so bold, so brilliant, so compassionate, so insightful. So logical and full of integrity.

So yeah – I will follow you. If I'm going to follow anyone – it's going to be you.

You say you have the way to heal the wounds of the brokenhearted – okay, if anyone does, you do.

You say you have the way to eradicate slavery from the world – okay, if anyone does, you do.

You say you have the way to fix the rupture between God and humans – okay, if anyone does you do.

You say you have all this because your origins are in God, that you are fully human and fully God...Okay – I believe you.

And I want to believe it more tomorrow than I do today.

And if that requires effort - then I'm in...

Because I love you, Jesus.

What about you?

Let's pray.