

Thought For The Week

Articles: [Being Sound](#) ~1,700 words, ~300 words

Being Sound, Parts 1&2

Pursuing Wholeness in Christ

An article drawn from the combined transcripts of Mike Mathis’s two-part sermon on “Being Sound”

In a culture that celebrates self-expression, personal truth, and endless debate, the biblical call to be “sound” stands in stark contrast. Soundness is not about being trendy, tolerant of every idea, or clever in argument. It is about being whole, complete, healthy, and firmly grounded in the truth of God’s Word.

In his two-part lesson titled “Being Sound,” Mike Mathis carefully unfolds what Scripture means when it speaks of soundness in wisdom, heart, mind, doctrine, faith, and speech. Drawing from Proverbs, Psalms, 1 Corinthians, James, 2 Timothy, and Titus, he shows that true soundness begins with God, is cultivated in the inner person, and then flows outward in teaching and life. The stakes are high: an unsound faith leaves us vulnerable to shame, instability, and the empty wisdom of the world.

Sound Wisdom from the Lord

The foundation of soundness is wisdom that comes from God. In the opening chapters of Proverbs we are repeatedly urged to seek wisdom, and we are told that “the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom” (Proverbs 9:10). But Mike highlights a specific phrase that appears in Proverbs 2:7: “He stores up sound wisdom for the upright.”

This is not merely intellectual knowledge. Wisdom is the skillful application of what we know. Solomon, when offered anything by God, did not ask for riches or long life; he asked for wisdom to govern God’s people well (1 Kings 3). He understood that knowledge without wisdom leads to pride and poor decisions. God gives both knowledge and understanding, but He specially stores up **sound** wisdom—wisdom that is solid, reliable, and aligned with His character—for those who walk uprightly.

Proverbs 3:19–21 further reveals that the Lord founded the earth by wisdom, established the heavens by understanding, and broke up the depths by knowledge. The same wisdom that ordered creation is available to us. Therefore the command is urgent: “My son, let them not depart from your eyes; keep sound wisdom and discretion” (Proverbs 3:21). Discretion is learning how to act on the knowledge we possess.

In Proverbs 8, wisdom is personified and speaks for herself: “Counsel is mine, and sound wisdom; I am understanding, I have strength” (Proverbs 8:14). This wisdom hates evil, pride, arrogance, and the perverse mouth. It is not neutral or accommodating. It is morally clear and practically powerful.

Yet the world offers its own wisdom. In 1 Corinthians 1:18–25, the apostle Paul confronts the Corinthian church with a sobering reality. The message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to those who are being saved it is the power of God. God has declared, “I will destroy the wisdom of the wise and bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent” (1 Corinthians 1:19; cf. Isaiah 29:14).

Paul asks the penetrating questions: “Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?” (1 Corinthians 1:20). The world’s wisdom can send rockets into space and build remarkable technology, but it often denies the very God who gave that ability. It refuses to acknowledge the Creator.

God’s response is to save people through what the world considers foolish—the preached message of Christ crucified. Jews demanded miraculous signs; Greeks pursued philosophical wisdom. But “we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God” (1 Corinthians 1:23–24).

Mike illustrates this truth with the conquest of Jericho. God instructed Israel to march around the city once a day for six days and seven times on the seventh day, blow trumpets, and shout. To human military strategy this was absurd—no battering rams, no siege engines, no clever tactics. Yet when the people obeyed, the walls collapsed. The foolishness of God proved wiser than men, and the weakness of God proved stronger than men.

The same principle applies today. Many consider the gospel message—that Jesus is the Son of God who died, was buried, and rose again on the third day—foolish or simplistic. They prefer sophisticated philosophies or emotional experiences. But God has chosen the “foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise” and the “weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty,” so that no flesh should glory in His presence (1 Corinthians 1:27–29). Christ Himself has become for us “wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption” (1 Corinthians 1:30). All boasting must be in the Lord.

Sound wisdom, then, is not found by cleverness or academic achievement. It is received from God through His Word and applied with humility and obedience.

A Sound Heart

Soundness must also reach the heart. Proverbs 14:30 declares, “A sound heart is life to the body, but envy is rottenness to the bones.”

At first reading one might think this refers only to physical health—the heart as the blood pump in the chest. While physical health matters, the context points deeper. Envy is an attitude of the inner person. A heart filled with envy will eventually destroy its owner. The envious person may harm others through spite or gossip, but the deeper damage is internal: “rottenness to the bones.” Bitterness and comparison eat away at the soul long before any outward destruction appears.

Mike emphasizes that the heart in view here is the biblical heart—the seat of thoughts, affections, and will. It is possible to appear outwardly religious while harboring envy that poisons the inner life. A sound heart is one that is healthy, free from the corrosive effects of envy and comparison, and aligned with God’s purposes.

Sound in God's Statutes

The psalmist prays in Psalm 119:80, "Let my heart be sound in Your statutes, that I may not be ashamed."

Psalm 119 is a sustained celebration of God's Word—His statutes, judgments, commandments, and precepts. To have a heart sound in these is to be shaped by Scripture rather than by culture or personal preference. When our hearts are anchored in God's revealed will, we have confidence and are spared the shame that comes from inconsistency or error.

Mike notes that if we are unsound in what we believe and practice, eventually someone will expose the inconsistency. Soundness in the statutes protects us from that shame and gives us a firm place to stand.

A Sound Mind

Part two of the lesson turns to the inner life more directly through the theme of a sound mind. Paul writes to Timothy in 2 Timothy 1:7, "For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind."

Timothy, a younger man, apparently struggled with fear in his ministry. Paul reminds him that the Spirit he received is not characterized by timidity. A sound mind is stable, clear-thinking, and able to discern truth from error.

James 1:5–8 provides the practical pathway: "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways."

God gives wisdom generously and without holding past requests against us. He does not say, "You asked before and I already gave you wisdom—figure it out yourself." He gives liberally. But the asking must be accompanied by faith that expects God to answer according to His will.

Doubt makes a person unstable, like a wave tossed by every wind of teaching or circumstance. Mike shares a sobering real-life example of a man in West Virginia who had stopped attending worship. When visited, the man complained that he did not see God answering his prayers. Yet his real issue was a critical spirit. He nitpicked the preacher's appearance, the fact that the preacher left early on Wednesday nights for a Bible study with another family, and other minor matters. His mind was so occupied with fault-finding that he could not see God's hand at work. He had become double-minded and unstable.

A sound mind refuses to be driven by criticism, doubt, or the winds of cultural opinion. It asks God for wisdom in faith and trusts that He will provide what is needed.

Sound Doctrine

Soundness must also characterize our teaching. In Titus 1:9 Paul instructs that an elder must be "holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict."

Again in Titus 2:1 he tells Titus, “Speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine.”

Notice the singular form—“sound doctrine,” not “sound doctrines.” Mike points out that doctrines (plural) often come from men. Jesus warned about the doctrines and commandments of men (Matthew 15:9). The Pharisees and Sadducees had developed elaborate systems of tradition that went beyond or contradicted Scripture. In contrast, the faith once for all delivered to the saints (Jude 3) is singular and unified. Sound doctrine is the apostolic teaching preserved in the New Testament—clear, consistent, and sufficient for salvation and godly living.

When we depart from this singular sound doctrine, we open the door to confusion, division, and error. Elders and teachers are charged to guard and proclaim it so that the church is built up and error is exposed.

Sound in Faith

Closely connected is soundness in faith. Paul tells Titus to rebuke certain false teachers sharply “that they may be sound in the faith” (Titus 1:13). He also instructs older men to be “sound in faith, in love, in patience” (Titus 2:2).

Sound faith is not merely intellectual assent; it is a living trust in God that produces obedience and endurance. It is stable rather than fluctuating with every new teaching or disappointment. A person sound in faith can face trials without abandoning the truth, because their confidence rests in the unchanging character of God and the finished work of Christ.

Sound Speech

Finally, soundness must govern our words. In Titus 2:7–8 Paul charges young men (and by extension all believers) to show themselves “a pattern of good works; in doctrine showing integrity, reverence, incorruptibility, sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you.”

Sound speech is speech that is truthful, gracious, and above legitimate reproach. It does not give opponents legitimate grounds for criticism. Mike illustrates the opposite with contemporary examples. He describes watching a program in which a man mocked the biblical teaching on baptism and defended instrumental music in worship by appealing to the Old Testament. When corrected with the truth that the old law was nailed to the cross (Colossians 2:14), the man dismissed the clear meaning of the text. He was willing to reach back into the Old Testament for justification when it suited his preference, yet he would never advocate bringing animal sacrifices or incense into Christian worship. Such selective and inconsistent reasoning produces speech that can—and should—be condemned.

In another setting, Mike observed a debate between a brother in Christ and a Calvinist who defended infant baptism on the grounds that babies are born in sin. The brother stood firmly on the Word without compromise. Sound speech does not need to be altered or softened; the truth itself is powerful. When we change or nuance the message to accommodate error, we reveal that our position lacks soundness.

Sound speech protects the reputation of the gospel and leaves opponents without valid accusation. It flows from a sound heart and mind that have been shaped by sound doctrine and sound faith.

The Meaning and the Call

Throughout both parts of the lesson, Mike returns to a simple definition: to be sound is to be perfect, complete, whole, or healthy. This is not perfection in the sense of sinless flawlessness, but wholeness and integrity—nothing missing, nothing corrupted, nothing unstable.

We need sound wisdom to discern truth from error and to live skillfully before God. We need a sound heart free from envy and bitterness. We need a sound mind that asks God for wisdom in faith and refuses to be tossed by doubt or criticism. We need sound doctrine that is anchored in the apostles' teaching rather than human traditions. We need to be sound in faith—steadfast and fruitful. And we need sound speech that adorns the gospel and silences legitimate criticism.

This wholeness is possible only in Christ. He is the wisdom of God. He is the Rock upon which we build. When we place our faith in Him, repent of sin, confess His name, and are baptized for the remission of sins, we enter into new life. Then, by continuing in His Word, we grow in soundness day by day.

Mike closes both messages with a clear invitation. If you have never obeyed the gospel, why not believe that Jesus is the Son of God, turn from sin in repentance, confess your faith, and be baptized into Christ? If you have been led away or grown cold, why not return? The church stands ready to encourage and restore. Let us be sound in obeying God rather than men.

In a world of shifting sand, God offers us solid rock. Let us pursue soundness in every area of life—wisdom, heart, mind, doctrine, faith, and speech—so that we may stand unashamed, stable, and effective for His glory until the end.

“He who glories, let him glory in the Lord” (1 Corinthians 1:31).

[back to top](#)

Being Sound, Parts 1 & 2

Pursuing Wholeness in Christ

In his two-part lesson “Being Sound,” Mike Mathis calls the church to pursue a complete, healthy, and whole faith rooted in God’s Word rather than the shifting wisdom of the world.

Scripture reading from 1 Corinthians 1 sets the foundation: the message of the cross appears foolish to the perishing, but it is the power and wisdom of God. Paul contrasts the world’s “wisdom” — which denies its Creator — with the apparent “foolishness” of preaching Christ crucified. Jews demand signs and Greeks seek philosophy, yet God saves believers through the preached gospel. As at Jericho, where marching and shouting toppled walls, God’s ways often seem weak or foolish by human standards, yet they prove wiser and stronger than man’s best efforts.

God stores up **sound wisdom** for the upright (Proverbs 2:7; 3:21). This is not mere knowledge but the skillful application of truth — discretion that leads to fearing the Lord and hating evil. A sound heart brings life to the body, while envy rots the bones (Proverbs 14:30). The psalmist prayed, “Let my heart be sound in Your statutes, that I may not be ashamed” (Psalm 119:80). Internally, this requires a **sound mind** — free from doubt and fear. James 1:5–8 urges us to ask God for wisdom in faith, without wavering, while 2 Timothy 1:7 reminds us God gives power, love, and a sound mind.

Outwardly, soundness appears in **sound doctrine**, **sound faith**, and **sound speech** (Titus 1–2). Elders must hold fast to the faithful word so they can exhort and convict with sound teaching. Older men are to be “sound in faith, in love, and in patience,” while all believers display integrity and speech that cannot be rightly condemned. Mike warned against nitpicking, worldly criticism, and man-made doctrines, contrasting them with unwavering adherence to apostolic truth — especially on salvation, baptism, and worship.

To be sound means rejecting envy, doubt, and human traditions while embracing God’s complete revelation. It means believing Christ is the Son of God, repenting, confessing Him, and being baptized for the remission of sins, then remaining faithful. Only then do we stand on solid ground, glorying in the Lord rather than ourselves.

May we pursue soundness in wisdom, heart, mind, doctrine, faith, and speech — healthy and complete in Christ.

[back to top](#)