

CHRIST SENT ME TO PREACH THE GOSPEL

1 CORINTHIANS 1:17 • TV069A

A television broadcast sermon delivered
SUNDAY, JULY 2ND, 1979
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Transcribed, edited and published
DECEMBER 1ST, 2017

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1 Corinthians 1:17

“For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.”

I’m taking my text today from the book of **1 Corinthians 1:17** in which the apostle Paul wrote; now listen to these words carefully, *“For Christ sent me not to baptize but to preach the gospel not with wisdom of words lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.”*

Now my friend the Word of God gives a prominent place to the preaching of the Gospel. When the Word of God describes the ministry of John the Baptist, the forerunner of the Lord Jesus Christ, the miracle child who came to be the forerunner of the redeemer, the Messiah, when it described his ministry in **Matthew 3:1-2**, it says; *“In those days came John the Baptist preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”*

Even our Lord preached the Gospel. He was a preacher. It says in **Matthew 4:17**: *“From that time Jesus began to preach and to say; repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”*

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After our Lord had died on the cross and rose again and appeared to His disciples, before He ascended back to the Father; He assembles the disciples before Him and these were His parting words. He said to these disciples: *“All authority is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved. He that believeth not shall be damned.”*

And then in **Romans 10:13** the Scripture says; *“Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. But how shall they call on Him in whom they’ve not believed and how shall they believe in Him of whom they’ve not heard and how shall they hear without a preacher and how shall they preach except they be sent?”*

You see, the Word of God gives a prominent place to the preaching of the Gospel. John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ, was a preacher. Our Lord Jesus Christ in **Luke chapter 4**, when He spoke to the congregation at Nazareth; *“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me. He hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor.”*

This is one of the things that the Messiah came to do, not only to deliver the captive, to set the prisoner free, to give sight to the blind, an ability to walk to the lame, but to preach the Gospel to the poor. *“And how shall they call on him in whom they’ve not believed, (except they hear the word of God), and how shall they hear without a preacher?”*

Now, in **1 Corinthians 1:21** the Scripture says: *“It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.”*

In **1 Corinthians 15:1** the apostle Paul said: *“Moreover brethren; I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, in which you believed and wherein you stand, and by which you’re saved if you keep in memory what I preached unto you.”* Paul preached the Gospel.

And then in **Titus 1:3** the Scripture says; *“God hath in due times manifested His Word, (how?) through the preaching of the gospel?”* God has manifested His Word through preaching. And Paul said, *“This preaching is committed unto me according to the commandment of God our Saviour.”* So, the Bible gives a prominent place to this thing of preaching the Gospel.

Now I believe every believer, every true believer, weeps over what’s taking place in our day. I believe every true believer is sad as he observes what is happening today. The whole religious world; now you listen to this, this is true. The whole religious world is making every effort, every effort possible, to do away with that which God has ordained to manifest His Word, to reveal His Son, and to save sinners, and that is the preaching of the Gospel.

The religious world is doing everything in its power to do away with the preaching of the Gospel. There’s so little ministry of the Word going on in this day, so little preaching of the Gospel.

We are ordaining and educating and hiring every kind of minister in the world except a minister of the Word of God. We have ministers of music, we have ministers of education, we have

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ministers of visitation and we have youth ministers. Where are the ministers of the Word of God? Where are the preachers of the Word?

In the book of **Acts chapter 6**; there was a problem in the church between the Grecian and Hebrew widows about the giving out of daily food. And the disciples gathered the church together and they said; "It's not right for the ministers of the Word to leave the preaching of the gospel and wait on tables. Wherefore, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of faith, and full of the Holy Spirit. Appoint them over this business, this material business, this physical business." And listen to what the apostle said, "And we will give ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the Word."

Oh today we have organized Sunday schools. We have organized training unions. We have youth fellowship. We have missionary circles. We have ball teams and we have church suppers. We have counseling services. We have family planning centers.

We have relegated to the scrap heap that which God has ordained, that which God almighty Himself has appointed for the salvation and growth of His people and the grace, the growth in grace and knowledge of Christ, of His church, and that is the preaching of the Gospel.

"It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." Christ said to His disciples, *"Go and preach the gospel."* Even our Master came preaching the Gospel. *"How shall they hear without a preacher?"*

And God hath chosen to reveal His Word, to manifest His Word, by the preaching of the Gospel. What are we doing with it today? It's practically been cut completely out of our religious services.

We have music and more music and more music. We have choirs of every age. We have more and more announcements. Take the average church service. It's made up of music and it's made up of announcements.

It's made up of recognizing a visitor and recognizing of people and prayers for the sick, raising money for all kind of projects and causes. The services of the church have a lot of everything in the world but what it ought to have and that's the preaching of the Gospel, the preaching of the Gospel of Christ.

It's sad to say that pastors today do everything but what God called them to do and that is preach the Word. The pastors today are church visitors, they're club members, and they're board members. They're solicitors for every humane cause. They give devotions. They marry the young. They bury the old. They visit the sick. They are busy doing everything under the sun except what God called them to do and that is to study and to pray and to preach the Word of God.

And I'll tell you, all we need for a revival in our churches and in our homes and in our own hearts; all we need for revival in our time, all we need for the blessings of God in our time, for

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the salvation of sinners, in our time, not the making a profession; I mean real redemption, real salvation; all we need for that in our time, is not more music, it's not more organization, it's not more ball teams, it's not more entertainment; what we need is a return to the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ!

That's what God will bless. He said, "*My Word will not return unto me void when it shall accomplish that whereunto I have sent it,*" the preaching of the Gospel of the Son of God.

You know, I've heard that little saying all my life, the little cliché. It sounds beautiful; it's just not true, but I've heard this all my life: "I had rather see a sermon than to hear one any day. I'd rather one walk beside me than merely show me the way."

Now that sounds beautiful. That's real, real, sentimental, and I guess that promotes human morality and human righteousness and these things. But let me tell you this, that is not the way God saves sinners.

God does not save sinners by example, no sir; a man has got to hear the Gospel. The Scripture says, "*The gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation,*" not a good life, not a meritorious life, not human righteousness, the Gospel.

"*He hath begotten us again with the Word of truth,*" the Gospel; "*Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God.*" Men aren't saved by seeing you; they are saved by seeing Christ. Men aren't brought to Christ by seeing you and seeing your example and seeing your conduct; they are brought to Christ by hearing the Gospel and seeing the Saviour, seeing the Substitute.

And I know what men mean by that. I know, like James says, "*Show me your faith without your works and I'll show you my faith by my works.*"

Yes, I can show you my faith by my works and I can justify my faith by my works and I can show you the genuineness of my faith by my works and I can show you the seriousness of my belief by my works, but I can't show you Christ by my works.

I have to preach the Gospel to you to show you Christ. You're going to have to see Him in His Word. You're going to have to hear who He is and what He came to do and why He came to do it and where He is now and how you can be brought into a living union with Him.

And that's by the preaching of the Gospel, not by the conduct of people down here on this earth. This is why Paul said in our text **1 Corinthians 1:17**: "*Christ sent me not to baptize but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.*"

Now, I want to take these statements one at a time and oh that we might return to the preaching of the Gospel. How many great sermons are preached today? How many good sermons are preached today? How many fair sermons are preached today? How many average sermons are preached, not many, not many?

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It's so difficult in our day. We hear good music and preachers are good promoters and they're good organizers and they're good entertainers. They're good toast-masters and they fellowship good but how many of them preach? How many of them preach the Gospel, lift up Christ, and exalt and magnify the sovereign Redeemer?

Listen to Paul, "*Christ sent me not to baptize.*" Now Paul's not discounting the importance or place of baptism. He got the same commission that all the other apostles received; "*Go ye and make disciples of all nations baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I've commanded you.*"

What he's saying here is this, "God didn't send me as my primary business and main concern to baptize. He sent me to preach the Gospel, not to baptize, but preach the Gospel. That's my main concern; that's my main interest. That is my God given task to preach the Gospel, not to organize churches as the primary purpose of my coming, but to preach the Gospel."

Now my friend; let us sing praises to God. The Psalms; those are the hymns of the church. The Psalms are the hymn book of the church and let's sing praises to God.

Let's worship the Lord and let us observe the table of the Lord. Let us baptize men upon the profession of their faith in Christ. Let us exhort one another and encourage one another. But our chief calling is to preach the Gospel, to declare unto men the glorious Gospel of God's redeeming grace.

But my dear preacher brother and my dear deacon and church member; let me say this to you, whatever is occupying the most of your time and the most of your effort and the most of your expense; God didn't send you to do that. God sent you to preach the Gospel, to preach the Gospel.

And all of your excuses and logic and reasoning will not discount this command; "*Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel.*" That's what we're sent to do, preach the Gospel. "*God sent me not to baptize but to preach the Gospel.*"

Now, there's not but one Gospel. There are not two Gospels any more than there are two Gods. There are not two Gospels any more than there are two Saviours or two heavens. He sent us to preach the Gospel, the Gospel.

And He said, "*Though we or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel; let him be accursed.*" There is but one Gospel and I want to define that Gospel for you, that Gospel we are sent to preach.

First of all: It's the Gospel of God!

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If you'll turn in your Bible to **Romans chapter 1:1** the apostle Paul said: *"Paul, a servant (bond-slave) of Jesus Christ separated to the Gospel of God."* It's God's Gospel that we've come to preach.

It's not the Baptist Gospel or the Methodist Gospel or the Catholic message or the Episcopalian; it's God's Gospel. That's our message, God's Gospel. He planned it before the foundation of the world in His eternal council He planned this salvation and He executed it.

He sent His Son into the world to be our Saviour, to bear our sins. He executed it, He applied it. God called us by His grace. He sustains it and He perfects it. It's God's Gospel. That is whose Gospel we're preaching.

We have a message from the Lord. When God sent the old prophets back in Old Testament days He said, *"Go and cry unto the people thus saith the Lord."* God didn't send us to take or to bring our message or our word but His Word and His Gospel.

"Woe is unto me if I preach not the Gospel," not a Gospel, not some Gospel, but the Gospel. There's just one and it's the Gospel of God.

Secondly: It's the Gospel of His glory!

Paul called it that in the book of **2 Timothy**; he said: *"It's the gospel of the glory of God."* And in **1 Corinthians**, he says, *"But of Him are you in Christ Jesus who is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. That as it is written; he that glorieth; let him glory in the Lord."*

This Gospel which we preach gives all the glory to God almighty, all the glory for saving us and cleansing us and redeeming us and pardoning us. All the glory goes to God. None of it goes to the preacher. None of it goes to the church. None of it goes to the sinner himself. All the glory goes to God. *"I am what I am, by the grace of God, (by the mercy of God),"* Paul said.

**"To God be the glory
Great things He hath done
To God be the glory."**

And then this Gospel is not only the Gospel of God and the Gospel of His glory but it's the Gospel of His grace. *"For by grace are you saved."* What is grace? It's unmerited favor. What is mercy? It is favor that we do not deserve.

Somebody said the definition of mercy and grace is this, "Grace is God giving us what we don't deserve and mercy is God not giving us what we do deserve." *"For by grace are you saved through faith and that not of yourselves; it's the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast."*

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Old Roland Hill, one of the great preachers of the past, once made this statement; he said; “Every sermon ought to contain three things.” Every sermon it doesn’t matter what you’re preaching on.

If you’re preaching on the millennium, if you’re preaching on the creation, if you’re preaching on the journey of Israel, or if you’re preaching on the choosing of the disciples, whatever you’re preaching on; every sermon ought to contain these three things:

First of all: Ruined by the fall! Men ought to be made to see what they are by nature, by birth, and by practice, ruined by the fall.

Secondly: Redemption by the blood! *“Without the shedding of blood there’s no remission.”* If we do not preach redemption by the blood we do not preach Christ. If we do not preach Christ crucified we do not preach the Gospel and we ought not preach.

Thirdly: Regeneration by the Holy Spirit! *“You hath He quickened who were dead in trespasses and sin.”* Every sermon ought to contain ruined by the fall, redemption by the blood, and regeneration by the Holy Spirit. And if it doesn’t contain those three things it ought not be preached.

“It’s not by works of righteousness that we have done, (by which we’re saved) but according to His mercy God has saved us by His grace.”

This Gospel is the Gospel of God, it’s the Gospel of His glory, and it’s the Gospel of His grace.

Fourthly: It’s the Gospel of His Son!

Now look back at **Romans 1** again. *“Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, separated to the Gospel of God, **verse 3**, concerning His Son.”*

That’s what the Gospel is all about. The Gospel is not, will you do this, or will you do that, or will you do the other for God? The Gospel is a declaration, a proclamation of what Christ has done for us. It’s the Gospel concerning a person all right but that person is not you; it’s Christ.

The Gospel says that God must be just and in order to be just and justifier of the ungodly. Christ had to come down here and enable God to be just by satisfying His justice, bearing the sins of the sinner and dying his death.

The Bible says that God must honor His law; He must. *“Who shall stand in His presence, he that hath clean hands and a pure heart?”* You don’t have them, I don’t have them; Christ had them and as a man He honored the law in order that God almighty might receive us unto Himself.

The Bible says *“God must punish sin.”* He must punish sin. And in order to save us, redeem us, take us to glory, He has to punish our sins, and He did it in the person of His Son.

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The Bible says that Christ Jesus our Lord meets all the requirements of God on the behalf of the sinner. He honors God's justice, He satisfies God's law, He bears our sins and He satisfies God's wrath. He takes our guilt!

Romans 5:19 says: *“By the disobedience of one (Adam) we were made sinners. So, by the obedience of one (Christ) shall many be made righteous. He was made sin for us who knew no sin that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.”*

So Paul said, *“God didn't send me to baptize,”* though baptism has its place. It is important. It is a function of the church. It is an ordinance of the church. It is a commandment of our God that all who believe on Christ and all who trust Christ should follow Him in baptism.

Paul said, *“That's not what God sent me to do; He sent me to preach the Gospel.”* And you might talk about the things that we're doing today and say, *“Well these are good things.”* All right; so they are good things in their place.

But I will tell you, nothing can take the place of the preaching of the Gospel. All of these other things just follow in line. But the primary work of the preacher is to do what God sent him to do and that is preach the Gospel of God concerning Christ.

That ought to be the center of our worship services. That ought to be the center of our mid-week service. That ought to be the center of our fellowship at any time, the preaching of God's Word. That's how God saves sinners.

Now watch this in closing, one final word: *“God sent me not to baptize but to preach the Gospel.”* Oh for some preaching, some preaching of God's Word, a message from the Lord, *“not with wisdom of words; (we don't need that) lest the cross of Christ be made of none effect.”*

What does Paul mean by wisdom of words? Well, people today with great, swelling words, and fancy phrases, and religious clichés try to take the offense out of the cross and the offense away from the message, and the edge, the sharp edge off the sword of God's Word.

Proud men do not like mercy so the preacher tones it down a little. Self-righteous men do not like substitution so the preacher tones it down a little. The worldly wise do not like revelation so the preacher tones it down.

And greedy men do not like holiness so the preacher takes the edge off the sword and when he takes the edge off the sword it will not cut, it will not wound, and it will not heal. Men with wisdom of words turn the minds of the people away from the Gospel of Christ to other things. Attention is directed to the preacher himself.

Look at the advertisement for the average meeting. Look at the advertisement for the average church. Look at the report after the average meeting and who's exalted and who's magnified and

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who's lifted up, the preacher, the church, the denomination, the number of people who were there, the number of professions that were made?

All of these things are prominent in the minds of the people, not Christ, not the redeemer, not His mercy, not His grace. Attention is directed to the preacher, to the doctrine, to the denomination, to the church, to the ceremony, to everything but Christ.

Our Lord said to those in His day: *"What think ye of Christ? Whose Son is He?"* When you leave your church on Sunday morning; what are you thinking about? What are you concerned about? What are you troubled about? What are you seeking?

Do you leave the preaching service under the weight of sin, concerned about your inward sin, seeking the mercy of God, rejoicing in the grace of God, rejoicing in the crucified, risen, reigning and interceding Redeemer?

Do you leave thinking about Christ or do you leave thinking about the records that you've broken, or the number of people that you have, or the temperature in the church, or the clothes that the people were wearing, or the good music that you heard, or the choir's special, or talking about something the preacher said or a joke somebody told?

I'm telling you this, we need to return to the preaching of God's Word. Men with enticing words and words of wisdom have turned the attention of the people away from Christ to everything under the sun but Jesus Christ.

And it's sad and it's tragic. That's the reason God's not blessing. I'm not surprised that God's not blessing; he's got no foundation to build anything on. He's got no Gospel to quicken men's hearts with.

Last of all: Men with wisdom of words try to make the Gospel acceptable to the natural mind!

Now my friend, the Gospel is its own power. We don't need to explain the Gospel; we just need to preach it. The Gospel is its own power. It's the power of God. That word is dynamite (dunamis); *"The Gospel is the power (dynamite, dunamis) of God to salvation to everyone that believeth."*

It's its own power. It doesn't need my aid. It doesn't need my help. It doesn't need my assistance. It doesn't need my reasoning. It doesn't need my argument. It doesn't need my illustration.

It's its own power; just preach it, sinner, God almighty is angry with the wicked. God calls on you to repent and God calls on you to believe on Christ. And God sent His Son to die on the cross for sinners. If you don't repent of sin and look to Christ and believe on Him and bow to His Lordship; you're going to feel the wrath of God.

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The Gospel is its own glory. It doesn't need us to dress it up. We don't need to put our stained glass windows and beautiful flowers and carpeted floors and all to make the Gospel acceptable; it's its own glory.

It's its own revealer. It's its own light. It's the seed that gives life. It's the water that quenches thirst. It's the bread that revives, for Christ is the Gospel and it will not fail. *"It shall accomplish that whereunto God sent it."*

I dare you to begin this day to preach the Gospel. Quit apologizing for God and preach the Gospel. God will bless it!