

We Preach Christ Crucified

Sunday, November 27th, 2010

1 Corinthians 1:17-24

“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. For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.”

I have a message today that I want you to hear. I want you to hear the message carefully and prayerfully. I hope that I have your attention. This is not an easy message to bring, but I believe that it is a message that needs to be preached.

Most of us know that these things are true, but not many people are expressing them. My text is found in 1 Corinthians Chapter 1:20 through 24. I am speaking today on this subject: “WE PREACH CHRIST CRUCIFIED.” This is our message and this is our Gospel.

The apostle Paul, writing to the city of Corinth and to the church of Corinth, says; *“Where is the wise; where is the scribe, where is the disputer (scholar and the debater) of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?”*

“For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God.” The world with its earthly wisdom failed to know God by means of its own wisdom and philosophy. *“It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. For the Jews (speaking of the religious people, those who were given to the ceremonies, rituals and the Law) require a sign and the Greeks (or the Gentiles) seek after wisdom. But we preach Christ crucified both the power and the wisdom of God.”*

This letter was addressed to the church at Corinth; Paul had preached in the city of Corinth. The apostle Paul was faced with the religious crowd. They were religious with their show of piety, ceremonies, form and outward morality. There were a lot of religious people there. There were synagogues, temples, ceremonies, feast days, and much religion.

Paul was also faced with the intellectuals, those people who were interested in logic, debate, and reason. They were interested in religion only as it could be explained to the satisfaction of the natural mind. They were interested in religious questions and religious discussions only as they satisfied the natural wisdom and philosophy of the intellectual minds of that day.

Another group that Paul contended with was those who were materialists. They were people who were taken up with greed, covetousness, materialism and easy living. Paul described them in this way, *“Their God is their belly.”*

These were people who thought that a man’s life consisted of what he has and what he owns (not what he is). Is this not also a picture of our day, of the people, actually, to whom I preach (to whom everyone who attempts to preach). Is this not a picture of our day?

We have a very rich and affluent society; none can deny that. America is a rich land, a prosperous land, an affluent society. John wrote over in Revelation 3:17, *“Thou sayest I am rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing.”* This is our day, *“Rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing.”*

We have good health, food, clothing, shelter, cars, houses, healthcare, Social Security, and retirement. We have all that we need and we are prone to judge our spiritual state by this material state. We are prone to judge our spiritual welfare and well-being by our physical and fleshly comforts. You can say, *“We have need of nothing; we are rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing.”*

God comes back and says, *“You do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked.”* Most people only pray when they are in trouble and it isn’t very often is it? When we do pray, we pray for something material or physical. So, we have a rich and affluent society to which we preach.

Today, we have a popular religion also. We have a God who is all love and is no wrath. We have a God who is all love and no righteousness and no judgment. We have a Heaven for everyone and condemnation for no one. I am told “everybody who dies is in Heaven.”

We have an accommodating creed today and an accommodating religion, it is “live and let live.” Everyone is right and no one is wrong. We have resolved all of our differences.

Some people say, “You worship your God and I will worship my God and we will all meet in Heaven some day.”

Most churches are not houses of worship. Our Lord Jesus Christ came into that temple, drove out the money-changers and said, “*My House shall be called the House of Prayer but you have made it a den of thieves.*”

How many churches are places of prayer, worship, and preaching? How many churches are dedicated and separated to fellowship and communion with God Almighty? No, this is not true; most churches today are social-centers, places of entertainment, and places of weddings, suppers, and ball teams.

We don’t advertise our churches as a place where you can hear the Gospel, a place where the Word of God is preached and where the Word of God is taught. We advertise them as the “friendly church.” What difference does it make if a church is friendly if the Gospel is not preached? We advertise it this way, “We have a church where everybody is somebody.”

Another way that we advertise the church is to come where friends meet and everyone is acquainted. Where is the church where the Gospel is preached? Where is the church where the Word of God is declared?

Unfortunately, today, we have a “professional ministry.” People enter the ministry; they enter a “professional ministry.” The day of prophets is gone; the day of preachers and evangelists is “out of style.” Prophets like Elijah, the apostle Paul and the John the Baptist are not welcome today. They are disturbers and troublemakers. A man doesn’t dare lift up his voice anymore; he just goes along.

Today’s preachers, (most of them), are hirelings; they are hired to conduct a beautiful service; they are hired to visit the hospitals, and have to visit the same people a half-a-dozen times or they will get their feelings hurt and quit the church.

Today’s preachers are hired to marry the young and to bury the dead. They are hired to council the troubled, the divorcees. They are hired to speak to the PTA, give benedictions, devotions and invocations. In general, they are hired to keep the peace; just keep everyone happy.

They dare not preach the naked Word of God or they will lose their jobs. They dare not “*reprove and rebuke and exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine.*” They dare not preach doctrine because they are a “professional minister.”

These things are just true; you know they are true and I know that they are true; no one says anything about them or does anything about them. We have a limited outreach as far as this program is concerned, but these things need to be said.

We have a whole nation of religious people. This whole nation is a religious nation. People have a zeal for God but who are totally ignorant of the God of the Bible. They are ignorant of God's holiness, His justice, His righteousness and His grace.

They are especially ignorant, Paul said, *"of God's righteousness."* *"They are going about to establish a righteousness of their own."* They are going about through religious works and duties to make themselves acceptable before God. Paul said, *"They have a form of godliness but they deny the power thereof."*

Paul said, *"They are ever learning, (ever studying), and never, (really), coming to the knowledge of the truth."* You see; the truth is a person; the truth is Jesus Christ. He said, *"I am the truth."*

Our Lord said this to the religious people of His day, *"You neither know me nor My Father."* These were very highly religious people. These were moral people. These people wore uniforms of religion; they kept the Feast Days, the Sabbath Days, and the Law. They stood on the street corner reading their scrolls and saying prayers so that *"they could be seen and heard of men."* Our Lord said, *"You don't know me."*

Answer this question; do men today know the true character of the Living God? They call Him the "Man upstairs" or "somebody up there." One man said, "Well God, he, she or it." Do men know God, or is it like David said in Psalm 50, *"Thou thoughtest I was altogether such a one as thyself."* I am saying, the average preacher and the average religionist today do not have the slightest conception of the true character of the Holy God of Scripture.

Men of the Old Testament feared the Lord; they said, *"Holy and Reverend is His name; the Lord is in His Holy Temple; let all the earth keep silence before Him. God is in heaven thou art upon the earth; let thy words be few."* Where is the reverence, fear and the awe of Almighty God?

Today's religion speaks of an unholy familiarity with God that is unbelievable. Men even stop on the stage in the middle of a message and look up and say that God spoke to them and said something to them. They have visions, dreams and these sort of things.

Do men today know the true nature of sin? Do they know what sin is? I am saying that they do not know who God is and what sin is. Sin to the average person is a material thing; it is something that you wear or don't wear, something you do or don't do, something you say or don't say or something that you eat or don't eat. They even say that it is something that you drink or don't drink. These are all material things.

How did Adam ever fall in the Garden of Eden when he didn't have any of these things? He had no liquor there, tobacco, drugs, picture-shows, dances, or clothing. How did he sin? What is sin?

Our Lord said, *"It is not what you put in your mouth that defiles you; it is what comes out of your heart."* The religious people got very offended at this. They got upset because their idea of sin was catalogued and laid out. They thought that sin was eating meat on a certain day, walking so far on a certain day and eating without washing your hands.

This is how we talk about sin today; it is all outward things. My friends; sin is who you are more than what you do. Sin is why you do what you do. Sin is a principle and a nature within; it is a rebellion in the heart, soul, and nature against God. Sin is *"coming short of the glory of God."*

"It is not what you put in your mouth that defiles you; it is what comes out of your heart." Our Lord said, *"Out of the heart proceeds evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, jealousy, envy, and lust."* All of these things come out of the heart; it is sin and that is what defiles us.

You know, today's religion is so far from the Scriptures. Is salvation and eternal life a gift or an offer? We keep talking about God offering this and offering that; is it a gift or is it an offer? The Scripture says, *"God hath given us eternal life. Eternal life is the gift of God; the wages of sin is death but eternal life is the gift of God."*

Are believers His workmanship or a combination of their workmanship and His workmanship? Is salvation by grace alone through faith by the power of God or is salvation a combination of something that God does, you do, you put it together, and then you have it?

Have we not substituted in this day a decision for the new birth and church membership for commitment to Christ? Have we not substituted just plain-old-emotionalism for worship? Where is the worship?

I know that there is a lot of emotionalism, hand-waving, shouting, dancing and carrying on. Where is the worship like Isaiah described in Isaiah 6, when he fell before God? What about John on the Isle of Patmos? What about David when he prayed, "*Who am I; what is my house that Thou shouldest show such mercy to us?*" Have we not substituted emotionalism and called it worship?

There are contests and competition for true communion with God Almighty. Where will all of this end? I was thinking yesterday, as I was watching all the religious programs, gimmicks, promotions, buying for the hearers and buying for the dollar, when will all of this high finance, telethons, give-a-ways, and deception end?

This is what it is, deception. They are taking pictures of things that are not being done. They beg for money, and then not use it for what is was given. This is deception and this is entertainment. There is begging, bragging, and religious politics. When will the church quit talking about a separation of church and state while they are trying to run the state?

There is corruption in the name of God; there is genuine corruption in the name of God. High finance and corruption is in the name of God Almighty, when will it end? It is getting worse.

One religious broadcaster said that we were "competitors." Who said that we were competitors? When a competitor gets a program it seems that you have to out do him. When he gets a balloon, you get a bigger balloon. It is "show business" they tell me. I don't believe that preaching the Gospel is "show business;" I believe that it is God's business.

Our Lord Jesus Christ stood in the temple. Mary and Joseph came seeking Him and said, "*You had us worried; where have you been?*" He said, "*I must be about My Father's business.*" Our business is the Father's business.

God's business is not show business, promotions, programs or entertaining men on the road to hell. It is not in trying to see how many television stations we can get, how many buildings we can build, or how big of an entertainment center we can build. It is not even in how big of a school we can build with our name on it.

I will tell you when all of this will end; it will end when people quit supporting it. This will end when people will recognize that this is not of God, that God is not in it. I believe that it was Ringling Brothers, Barnum and Bailey Circus that said, "There is a sucker born every minute; there is someone there to take his money."

There is a sucker born every minute and there is a religious huckster waiting in the wings to take his money. They are doing a good job of it. They are policing old people, taking Social Security checks, and rewriting wills. This is sad, it is all high finance, politics, programs, promotion and entertainment and it is in the name of God. This is so sad!

The apostle Paul stood there in that city of Corinth with its intellectualism, materialism, greed, and religion. Paul said, *“We preach Christ and Him crucified.”* He is our message.

God always has his true preachers. I will tell you this, the sheep of Christ can recognize this message; they can recognize it. They know when a man is preaching Christ and when he is preaching himself. They know when a man is preaching for the glory of God and when he is preaching for gain, greed, and covetousness.

“We preach Christ crucified.” God has always had His true ministers that dare to preach Christ and Him crucified. They preach His Word and His Gospel and His Redeemer. The Scripture says, *“To them which are called (by the Spirit of God), both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.”*

God has always had His called sheep; they are out there. He said, *“In the last days, perilous times shall come. Men shall be lovers of themselves more than lovers of God.”* These antichrists, false prophets and preachers will come; *“they will show great signs and wonders, in so much, that if it were possible, they would deceive the very elect.”*

It is not possible; God’s elect are not deceived; they recognize the Gospel. God’s people know a fraud when they see one and hear one. They know a huckster and a flesh-merchant when they hear one. They know when a man is preaching the Gospel and when a man is not preaching the Gospel because *“To those who are called, Jesus Christ is the wisdom of God and Jesus Christ is the power of God.”*

We started here, on this station, nearly 12 years ago. We have the same format, the same Gospel and the same message. If God lets us stay on another 12 years, it will be the same format, the same Gospel and the same message. We preach the Gospel of God’s redeeming grace through Jesus Christ alone.

There is not going to be a give-away or a giving. There is not going to be finance or politics. This program is not going to be a promotion or entertainment; it is going to be the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

In the midst of all of this religion, materialism, and intellectualism, the apostle Paul declared; *“I am determined to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ and Him crucified.”*

What do I preach when I preach about Christ?

First of all: I preach about the glory of His person. John said in John 1; *“In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God and all things were made by Him. Without Him was not anything made that was made; that Word became flesh and dwelt among us. We beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.”* When Isaiah saw His glory, *“he spake of Him.*

The disciples said, *“Show us the Father and we will be satisfied.”* Christ said, *“He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.”* In Hebrews 1, the apostle Paul by the power of the Holy Spirit, (using him to pin them) said; *“God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake to our fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things by whom He made the worlds. Who being the brightness of His glory, and the exact image of His person, and upholding all things by the Word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of God.”*

My friend; I am preaching the glory of His person. The Gospel is not a proposition; it is a proclamation of a person, the person and work of Jesus Christ. That is what the Gospel is; the Gospel is not what you do for God but what God through Christ, has done for us.

Not only do we preach the glory of His person, but we preach the excellency of His character. Jesus Christ is the righteousness of God; He is the holiness of God. *“He was tempted in all points, as we are, yet without sin. He had no sin and He knew no sin. He perfectly obeyed God’s Law in every jot and tittle.”*

Abraham was the friend of God, but not without sin. Moses was the meekest man, but not without sin. David, *“Was a man after God’s own heart,”* but not without sin. John the Baptist was the greatest man born of woman, but not without sin.

Paul was the greatest apostle, but not without sin. Mary was the mother of our Lord, but not without sin. God said, *“But of Him; this is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.”*

Jesus Christ is the righteousness of God. If we have any righteousness before God it will be because of a union by faith with Him. It will be as God considers us and accepts us, receives us, and regards us by faith in Christ; He is our Righteousness.

We preach about Him and the power of His blood, the glory of His person, the excellency of His character and the power of His blood; *“His blood cleanseth us from all sin.”* Moses wrote in Leviticus 17; *“I have given you the blood upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls; it is the blood that maketh atonement for the soul.”*

It is not the works of religion that makes atonement it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul. Atonement means at-one-ment which reconciles you to God. *“Without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sins. Jesus Christ died that God may be just and justify you and me.”*

You may say that all preachers tell you to “believe.” Let me tell you something; we have to tell people whom to believe. It is not just what you believe; it is in whom you believe. *“I know whom I have believed,”* Paul said. It is not what I believe or when I believe; it is *“whom,”* the person that I believe. The object of faith is Christ, the Son of God.

Then, we preach the efficacy of His intercession. *“There is one Mediator between God and men and that is the man Christ Jesus. He ever lives to make intercession for us.”*

You see, Christ is our redemption, our wisdom, our sanctification, our holiness, our hope, and He is our life. *“Christ is all and in all. In Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily and you are complete in Him.”*

We have to quit preaching about the Gospel and start preaching the Gospel. God will help us and God will sustain us. God will provide for us; Almighty God will open the door. We don't have to beg men to support God, He will provide.

Then, we preach the promise of His return; He said, *“I go to prepare a place for you. If I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself that where I am there you may be also.”*