

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO PREACH CHRIST CRUCIFIED?

1 CORINTHIANS 1:21-24 • TV157A

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1 Corinthians 1:21-24

“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 want you to open your Bible with me today to the **book of 1 Corinthians**. I am going to speak on my favorite subject; my message today will be on the subject: “**WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO PREACH CHRIST CRUCIFIED?**”

Paul, writing in **1 Corinthians 1:22** says; “*For the Jews, that is the religious people, require a sign and the Greeks seek after wisdom: But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews, (the religious people), a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness, (or sheer nonsense); but unto them which are called both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.*”

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What is it to preach Christ crucified? Is it just to state the fact that Jesus of Nazareth was crucified on a cross, that He died on a cross between two thieves, and that He was buried? Is it to exhort men to believe that fact, and then go onto other things?

Is that what it means to preach Christ crucified, to state the facts concerning His death only? Paul indicated that when He preached Christ crucified that everything a man needed to know was included in that message.

For at the church of Corinth he wrote; "*I am determined; to know nothing among you.*" Corinth was a city of philosophers, orators, so-called wise men who met on a regular basis to discuss what new thing they had learned.

Paul said to these people; "*I am determined to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified.*" All that a man needs to know; the message of God, the Gospel of redemption, is in Christ and Him crucified. That is what Paul is saying; "*I am determined.*"

Paul could have known other things. He was one of the wisest, most educated men of his day and one of the most experienced men. But, he said; "*I determined to know nothing but Christ and him crucified.*"

Here is the reason for that; a man can have the form of religion without having true faith. We know that is so because that is one of the accusations that the apostle brought against one of the other churches. He said, "*You have a form of godliness but you deny the power thereof.*"

So, a man can have a form of godliness, a form of religion, and not have true faith. But, if a man has true faith in Jesus Christ, the right form of worship, the right form of fellowship, the right form of religious ceremonies, he will immediately follow Christ, the good Shepherd.

A man can have the form and not have true faith. If he has true faith (the correct form) obedience will follow. It will affect the way he worships God, the way he prays, the way he teaches and preaches.

Another thing; a man can have outward, moral conduct, before other men, without being converted, without having true conversion; now that is so. A man can have a right, moral conduct, before people.

I am not talking about before God, because before God, "*there is none that doeth good, no not one. There is none that understandeth; there is none that seeketh after Christ.*"

But, a man can have outward, moral conduct before men, and not be converted, not be regenerated. But, if a man experiences true conversion and true regeneration, it produces godly conduct, not only before men, but before God, not only outwardly but inwardly.

Notice this; a man can have religious orthodoxy. He can have zeal for God. He can have some correct theology without having redemption. Saul of Tarsus is a perfect example of this!

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He said that he had “*great zeal and before the law was blameless.*” Paul exceeded many his equals. He was a Pharisee of Pharisees. He had the orthodoxy and he had the ceremonies and the traditions of religion but he did not know Christ.

So, a man can have this orthodoxy and theology and not know God. But, a man who knows God will be led by the Spirit of God into the correct theology.

You do not arrive at Christ through doctrine; you arrive at correct doctrine through Christ. Our Lord said, “*The Holy Spirit, when he is come, will guide you unto all truth.*” You can’t be guided into truth, all truth, the truth of Christ, until you know Him.

A man can have knowledge of Bible facts and accurately and correctly quote Scripture without knowledge of Christ.

This was true of the Pharisees. Our Lord accused them of searching the Scriptures. He said, “*You search the scriptures for in them you think you have eternal life but they are they which testify of me.*”

So, a man can have a working knowledge of the Bible. He can know the books of the Bible, the authors of those Books, where they were written, when they were written, and to whom they were written.

He can correctly quote certain Scriptures and he can know something about the history recorded in the Bible and not have knowledge of God.

But, a man who has knowledge of God, a knowledge of Christ; he has a knowledge of the Scriptures and a true understanding of the mysteries of God’s work.

This is why Paul said, “*I am determined to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified.*” Because, if you come to know Christ, the right form, the right theology and the right conduct, an understanding of the mysteries of the Scripture will follow.

What I am saying is this and what the apostle records is that the Gospel of God is concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord. That Gospel of God is all revealed at Calvary, in the great work of redemption, accomplished by Jesus Christ on the cross.

Christ crucified is the fulfillment of all Scripture. Christ crucified is the goal and end of the Levitical law. Christ crucified is the fulfillment of every promise and every prophecy. Christ crucified is the message of the prophets: “*To him give all the prophets witness.*”

Christ crucified is the hope of the sinner, “*Christ in you, the hope of glory.*” Christ crucified is the glory of the Father. Moses said, “*Lord; show me your glory.*” He said, “*I will be merciful; I will be gracious.*”

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Christ crucified is the revelation of the Spirit; Christ said, “*He shall not speak of himself, but he will take the things of mine and show them to you.*”

That is where men learn of God. That is where men learn of forgiveness. That is where men learn of redemption, at the cross. The hymn writer has correctly stated it:

“**At the cross, at the cross
Where I first saw the light
And the burden of my heart
Rolled away,**

“**It was there by faith
I received my sight
And now I am happy
All the day.”**

When Paul said, “*We preach Christ crucified,*” did he mean that he only talked about the death of Christ, that he only talked about Jesus Christ’s suffering from the cross and said nothing of His pre-existence, nothing of His incarnate glory, nothing of His holy life, nothing of His commandments, nothing of His teachings and miracles, nothing of His resurrection, nothing of His ascension, nothing of His mediatorial reign, nothing of His second coming and His eternal reign?

Is that what Paul meant? Certainly not, but when we say, we preach Christ crucified we are saying that we preach (in the death of Christ) all of His attributes, all of His purpose and all of His glory.

I want to give you seven tremendous things that I believe are revealed to us in the message, we preach Christ crucified.

It’s not just to say that He died. You haven’t preached Christ crucified just to state the fact that He died and go unto other things, for in the death of Christ is contained all that God has written from **Genesis 3:15** to the last chapter of the **Revelation**. I want to show you that!

First of all: To preach Christ crucified is to preach Christ as our eternal Surety and Representative of His people!

What do you mean by that preacher? I mean this; the cross was not an afterthought; the death of Christ was not an afterthought. The death of Jesus Christ on the cross was no solution which God came up with in time to correct a bad situation that took place in the Garden of Eden; that’s not so!

There was a Saviour before there was a sinner. Before Adam fell, Christ was ordained, appointed, and designated as the Redeemer of sinners. Listen to the Scriptures; Peter speaking to the people, who crucified Christ, when he preached at Pentecost, said this; “*You with wicked*

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hands have crucified the Lord of glory, but you did what God determined before to be done. He was delivered into your hands by the determinate council and foreknowledge of God.” John called Christ, “the lamb slain from the foundation of the world.”

I am saying this; the relationship between Christ and His people goes back further than Calvary. It goes back further than Mount Moriah. It goes back further than the Garden of Eden.

It goes back into the council halls of eternity, “*for Christ is the surety of an everlasting covenant.*” His blood is the blood of an everlasting covenant. His priesthood is an eternal priesthood like that of Melchizedek, “*having no beginning or ending.*”

So, here is what we are saying; when Christ died on that cross, if I preach Christ and Him crucified, when He died on that cross, that crucifixion was no afterthought. It didn’t occur to God or fall into the plan and purpose of God after Adam fell but Christ was the Lamb slain in the purpose of God, in the mind of God, in the ordained council of God, before Adam was ever created; “*he was the lamb slain from the foundation of the world.*”

You see, my friend; “*we were chosen in Christ, before the world began;*” that is what Ephesian epistle tells us. In **2nd Thessalonians chapter 2:13:** Paul said, “*I thank God for you brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you unto salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.*”

“*God chose us in Christ before the world began.*” He accepted us in Christ. He looked on us and loved us in Christ. He redeemed us in Christ.

When we preach Christ crucified, we are saying that the one who is hanging on that cross is the appointed Saviour, who is dying the appointed death, at the appointed time, for the appointed people.

That is what the Scripture teaches. The Lamb slain before the foundation of the world was promised and prophesied all the way through the Old Testament and was manifested and fulfilled in time.

That is what Christ is saying in **John 6:37-39:** He said, “*All that my Father giveth me shall come to me and him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven not to do my own will but the will of him that sent me. And this is the will of him that sent me, that of all of which he hath given me, I will lose nothing but will raise it up again at the last day.*”

So, to preach Christ crucified, you have to go back in the council halls of eternity and preach when that death was ordained, when that death was appointed, by whom that death was appointed, who is the planner of it, who is the one who decreed it and who is the one who purposed it. It was almighty God!

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When did He purpose it, “*before the world began?*” Christ said, “*For this cause came I to this hour.*” He talked about going to the cross and suffering and dying. His disciples said, “Don’t do that Lord.” He said, “*For this cause came I to this hour.*”

When He prayed in Gethsemane’s Garden He lifted His eyes to heaven and He said, “*Father, the hour is come, glorify thy Son that thy Son may glorify thee.*” So, that is what it is to preach Christ and Him crucified.

Secondly: To preach Christ and Him crucified is to preach Christ the Messiah, the Christ, the Old Testament Messiah.

You see; over here in **1 Corinthians 15**, Paul said; “*I delivered unto you, first of all, that which also I received, how that Christ died for our sins, according to the scriptures, that he was buried and rose again, according to the scriptures.*”

What Scriptures are we talking about there, according to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John? No sir; according to Moses, according to Abraham, according to David, according to Jeremiah, according to Isaiah? These are the Scriptures that we are talking about, the Old Testament Scriptures.

From the first promise, in **Genesis 3:15**, when God said, “*the seed of woman will bruise the serpent’s head,*” to the day that John the Baptist stood on the banks of Jordan and said, “*behold the lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world;*” every promise, every prophecy, every picture, every type announces the death of Jesus Christ on the cross.

How do you preach Abel’s sacrifice without the cross? There is no point to Abel’s sacrifice. There’s no point to the teaching there at all. Here is a young man who brought to an altar, blood, and shed the blood of an animal on an altar thousands of years ago.

“*God had respect unto Able and to his offering.*” Animal blood cannot put away man’s sin. How in the world can animal blood be sufficient for the sins of a human being? What does that sacrifice say? How do you preach it? Well, it means nothing except in the light of the cross.

How do you preach Isaac’s experience on Mount Moriah when Abraham took his son up there and put him on an altar and sacrificed him and God said, “*Don’t touch the lad!*” He looked behind him and there was a ram caught in the thicket.

Abraham released his son and put the ram in his place and the ram died and shed its blood. There is no point to that story except it points to Calvary where Christ is the substitute who hung on the cross in our place and in our stead.

How do you preach the Passover in Egypt, how do you handle it, how do you deal with it? It is foolishness without the cross as it is fulfillment.

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You see, one day when the people were down in Egypt and God would deliver them, he told them to “*take a lamb without spot or blemish, the firstling of the flock, and to put it up for three or four days and observe it.*”

Then, “*they were to kill that lamb and eat the roasted flesh and put the blood on the doorpost and on the lentil,*” and God said; “*I'll pass over you when I see the blood.*” What does that mean? Well, Paul tells us; “*Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.*”

You see; when I preach Christ crucified, I am preaching the whole Old Testament, every type, every illustration, every promise, every prophecy, every one of these things.

How do you preach the Brazen Serpent? Here the people that had been bitten by the fiery serpents and were dying. God said to Moses; “*Make a serpent of brass in the image of the serpents that have bitten the people and lift it up on the pole and whosoever looketh shall live.*”

That doesn't mean a thing in this world accept that it points to Calvary. You see, those people took that very serpent of brass and worshipped it until Hezekiah came along and ground it into powder and said that it wasn't anything but “*a worthless piece of brass.*”

That serpent had no power to heal or to save; it was the Christ that the serpent represented. That is Christ crucified.

How do you preach the Smitten Rock when Moses smote the rock and the water came out and the thirsty people drank and lived? “*That Rock is Christ;*” that is what the Scripture says.

How do you preach the lamb that was killed and the atonement and the tabernacle when the high priest came into the presence of God and put the blood on the mercy seat? What does that mean? It means nothing except for Calvary.

That is what I am saying; to preach Christ crucified is to preach Christ dying according to the Scriptures. “*He was buried and rose again according to the scriptures,*” and all of the Scriptures.

What does **Isaiah 53: 4 through 6** mean, “*He was wounded for our transgressions? He was bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement of our peace was laid on him. By his stripes we are healed.*” It means nothing except you preach Christ crucified.

Thirdly: To preach Christ crucified is to preach the virgin birth, the incarnation of Christ!

There are people all over the world who believe in the virgin birth but don't know why and they don't know why the virgin birth is necessary. They don't know why Jesus Christ had to be born of a virgin.

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Well, I will tell you why. The one who died on the cross to be our Saviour had to be the Son of God. He couldn't be the son of Joseph. He couldn't be the son of a human being; he had to be the Son of God.

The death of an ordinary man would do me no good. Plenty of people died on crosses before and after Jesus Christ died on the cross but He was no ordinary man. As the Centurion says, "*This was the Son of God.*"

He was born not of man but of God, born of the Spirit of God. **Isaiah 7:14** says; "*The Lord himself shall give you a sign. Behold; a virgin shall conceive and bring forth a son.*" In **Matthew**, interpreting that, says, "*and thou shall call his name Jesus, Immanuel God with us. He shall save his people from their sins.*"

If Christ is not virgin born, He is Joseph's son and consequently a son of Adam, and consequently a sinner, and consequently His death is as worthless as anybody else whoever died on a tree. In fact; "*Cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree.*"

Galatians 4: 4 and 5 says: "*In the fullness of the time God sent his Son, (his son, not Joseph's son), into the world, made of a woman, (not made of a man and woman) made under the law, to redeem them who were born under the law.*"

My friend, the virgin birth of Jesus Christ indicates that He is the Son of God, He is without sin. He is the perfect sacrifice and the perfect substitute. He did not partake in Adam's transgression; He knew no sin. He died on the cross as the Son of God and the Son of man.

Fourthly: To preach Christ crucified is to preach Christ the sinless substitute!

"He was made sin for us who knew no sin that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." You see, righteousness and holiness can never be provided by one who does not uphold the perfect law of God in "*every jot and tittle.*"

The suffering Saviour must also be the sinless Saviour. It not only says, "*He did no sin, but he knew no sin. He was tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin.*"

When we preach Christ crucified we are talking about Him who died as the substitute for sinners who had no sins of His own for which to die. He took our transgressions, our iniquities, and our sins. "*By his stripes we are healed.*"

Fifthly: To preach Christ crucified is to preach Christ the risen one!

He is not going to arise unless He dies. You have to have His death before you have His resurrection. The angel said when they came to the tomb on that Sunday morning; "*Why do you seek the living among the dead? He's not here; he is risen.*"

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Paul talking about His resurrection says; “*Who is he that condemneth; it is Christ that died, yea rather, is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, whoever liveth to make intercession for us.*”

“*If Christ be not risen, our preaching is in vain. If Christ be not risen, your faith is in vain. If Christ be not risen, we are false witnesses of God. If Christ be not risen, the dead rise not. If Christ be not risen, you are yet in your sins. If Christ be not risen we are of all men most miserable.*”

But, by the death of Christ, one clear fact is indicated; Jesus Christ the perfect substitute who died on the cross and was buried has been raised by the power of God and seated at God’s right hand, having fulfilled all that God required for us, as our representative, and God has accepted His effectual, sufficient, and perfect work, and nothing needs to be added to it.

As our Lord said before He died on that cross; “*It is finished;*” the work is complete, the work is totally fulfilled, all that God requires, His perfect law satisfied, His justice honored, and His people redeemed.

Sixthly: To preach Christ crucified is to preach the exalted one!

Our Lord is not on the cross. Our Lord is not in the tomb. Where is Jesus Christ? The Scripture says; “*He sat down at the right hand of God expecting until his enemies become his footstool.*”

In **Philippians 2:7**, the apostle Paul said; “*Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus who thought it not robbery to be equal with God but made himself of no reputation and took upon himself the form of a servant and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.*”

Wherefore; do you see how Paul preached Christ crucified and moved right into every subject related to redemption, every subject related to faith, every subject related to the redeemed people’s position?

Paul says, “*Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

There would have been no crown without a cross. There would be no kingdom without a cross. There would be no ascension to glory without a cross. Now that is right!

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That's what we mean by preaching Christ crucified. He's exalted to the right hand of God. We are accepted and seated in Him. Paul writes in the whole ninth and tenth chapter of **Hebrews** that we as believers are made priests unto God in Christ. In the book of **Revelation** it says, "*he hath made us kings and priests unto God.*"

We have the privilege, the right, and the boldness and even the commandment to come into God's very presence. Because we have a high priest, Jesus Christ, who has opened for us through the veil by His flesh or by His death, or by the suffering and sacrifice of His flesh, a new and living way into the presence of God.

You can't even preach this priesthood without His death. You can't preach the renting of the veil without His death. You cannot preach praise without His death.

What are the sacrifices that a believer brings to God? We don't bring animal sacrifices, blood sacrifices, or silver and gold sacrifices. We bring the sacrifice of praise, worship, gratitude, adoration and love; these are the sacrifices.

But, we have the boldness to come into God's presence because Christ died. Christ crucified cannot be exhausted. You can preach it from now until the day He comes, every message, every sermon, and you never get to the depth of it; you never get to the bottom of it and you never get to the fullness of it. You have just touched the hem of the garment. He is our great high-priest.

Last of all: To preach Christ crucified is to preach His eternal surety-ship and our relationship with Him. When He came to die on that cross, the appointed Saviour, the appointed death at the appointed time, is to preach His eternal representation.

It is to preach His sinless life, His virgin birth. It is to preach His effectual sacrifice, His priesthood. It is to preach our relationship with Him. It is to preach Christ the virgin born, crucified, risen, exalted one, and it is to preach Christ coming again.

He told his disciples "*I go to prepare a place for you. If I go and prepare a place I will come again.*" How did He prepare that place? He prepared that place by His death. He prepared the people by His death. "*I will come again and receive you unto myself.*"

When He ascended to heaven the angels stood and said to the disciples; "*You men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven shall come so in like manner as you have seen him go.*"

He came down here and purchased a people and He purchased a kingdom and He went back to glory and He is coming again to claim what He purchased.

So, when Paul said, "*I determined to know nothing among you but Jesus Christ and him crucified,*" you can say, "I know the whole Bible, the whole council of God, the whole purpose and plan of God for sinners."

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