

WE PREACH CHRIST CRUCIFIED

1 CORINTHIANS 1:21-23 • TV134B

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By
HENRY T. MAHAN

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1 Corinthians 1:21-23

“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.”

Here’s my subject today: **“WE PREACH CHRIST AND HIM CRUCIFIED.”**

Here’s my text: **1 Corinthians 1:22 and 23**. Now listen very carefully to the text; *“For the Jews require a sign and the Greeks seek after wisdom but we preach Christ and him crucified.”*

Have you ever thought about this question: what do people really want from a preacher; just exactly what do they really want? Paul tells us in this text; he tells us what people want. In different crowds and they want different things.

He says: *“The Jews”* (and he’s talking here about people as a race in particular; he is talking about the religious crowd). It so happened that the Jews then were the religious crowd. There were the Pharisees, the Scribes, the Sadducees, and all of these fellows were Israelites.

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He says: *“They want a sign; they seek a sign.”* They are not content with the Word of God but they want a special sign. They want to see something, miracles, healing, great crowds, impressive movements, and great miraculous works.

They said, *“Show us a sign, and we will believe.”* That’s what they told the Lord: *“show us a sign and we will believe.”* He said: *“This evil and adulteress generation seeketh after a sign; there shall no sign be given but that of Jonah.”* Now, that’s the Word of God. There is no sign going to be given except what the Word of God says.

Do you remember the rich man in hell talking to Abraham? He said: *“Father Abraham; I have five brothers on the earth; why don’t you send Lazarus back to the earth and warn them not to come to this awful place.”*

Abraham said: *“Well, they have the word of God.”* The man said: *“No father Abraham; (wait a minute) they don’t believe the word of God but if somebody rose from the dead, they would believe that.”*

“If one went back from the dead and preached to them, they would believe that; they would believe a sign.” Abraham said: *“If they believe not the word of God they won’t believe no one rose from the dead.”*

This is what these religious fellows were saying: *“show us a sign, show us a sign.”* That’s what they are saying in religion today: *“show us a miracle; heal somebody. What sign can you show that we may believe? Send us a dead man; we will believe.”*

They stood under the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ and they said: *“come down from the cross; we will believe you. If you be the Christ; save yourself. He saved others; himself he cannot save. Come down from the cross and we will believe you. Show us a sign.”*

Paul puts his foot down and he says this: *“Though the religious crowd seeks a sign; we preach Christ and him crucified. He’s our message; He’s our message and we are not going to resort to these demands.*

“We are not going to meet these terrible cries. We are not going to satisfy the curiosity of the religious crowd. We are going to keep on preaching Christ and keep on preaching Christ crucified.

What else do people want?” Well, the Greeks; who are the Greeks? Well, this is a letter to Corinth. Corinth was the center of learning of the Greek nation. That’s where the philosophers lived. That’s where the orators lived. That’s where the worldly wise lived.

These fellows just loved to challenge one another. *“Challenge us; say something new and say something clever. Say something that is unusual. Say something new; give us a new revelation.”* That’s what they were like. This was Corinth, you know, the center of learning.

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They said: “The Greeks want some wisdom, now, not godly wisdom, that’s not what they were looking for. They wanted some of man’s wisdom, human learning. Say something clever.”

In the next Chapter Paul said: *“I didn’t come to you with wisdom of words. I didn’t come to you with enticing words of man’s wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be made of non-effect:*

“I came to you in weakness and fear and trembling declaring unto you the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ: that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, (in the learning of men, in the human logic of the religious crowd) but in the power of God.”

They wanted some wisdom. We like our preachers to be trained, to be intellectual, to be philosophers, psychologists and counselors. One short way out of the ministry is to start dealing from the pulpit with that mess right there. That’s a sure shortcut out of the ministry. It’s either the Gospel of Jesus Christ or nothing.

Shall we be clever preachers or Christ preachers? You can’t be both. Shall we be philosophers or prophets? You can’t be both. Don’t tell me you can, I know better. Shall we tickle the ears or shall we prick the hearts? You can’t do both. Shall we please men or please God? You can’t do both.

What do people want? Well, there are a lot of fellows willing to give them what they want as long as they will pay them. There are fellows that come along and they will put their hands on your head and holler: “heal him in Jesus name.”

They will try their mind-over-matter, psychosomatics and all of this stuff and folks will fall for it. They will pass their washtubs and take up a collection.

Folks want to see a miracle; they want to see a sign, you know; they want to see something. They don’t want to hear anything; they don’t want to hear the Gospel. They are not going to listen to the Word of God.

They want to see gifts and speak in tongues; “show us the gift of prophecy. Give us a new revelation and tell us about a dream or a vision, anything.”

Then it comes along the cold, dead, dry, dead letter, the orthodox and the intellectual and he says; “Say something clever. Give us a new revelation.”

“We want to hear you talk about philosophy and talk about current events, talk about psychology, talk about the counseling that you carry on to keep folk’s marriages together, keep folks out of this place, that place, and the other place.”

Paul said: *“No, I preach Christ. I am determined, to know nothing among you but Christ crucified. (Those that seek miracles and wonders and signs; I’ll know nothing among you that seek intellectualism, you that seek philosophy; I will know nothing among you but Jesus Christ). I am determined to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified.”*

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There was a couple that went to England many, many, years ago. They had heard of the great Spurgeon, the man who pastored the Metropolitan Tabernacle in London, England, so many years; 38 years and preached to thousands upon thousands.

His sermons had been reprinted and sent to more countries than any preacher that had ever lived, other than the apostle Paul and some of the other apostles. But anyway; this couple went to hear him on Sunday and his church was packed out Sunday morning. They couldn't even get in. They went to hear another preacher in town, a well-known preacher.

When the man brought the message the man and his wife left after the message was over. They were impressed and one of them turned to the other and said: "my, what a sermon, what a sermon, what a great sermon."

That night they went to Charles Haddon Spurgeon. When the message was over, the man and his wife started up the aisle of that great Metropolitan Tabernacle and tears were in both their eyes. One said to the other: "What a Saviour, what a great Saviour!"

There's a difference; do you know the difference? My preacher friend; do you know the difference? If you don't know the difference, your people won't know the difference. God knows the difference.

The apostle Paul said: "I preach Christ. I don't preach sermons; I preach Christ. I deliver messages from God." You see; God's true preacher; there are three things about him, he knows and most folks after a while will find out:

First of all: "*He's a voice in the wilderness!*" God's true preacher is no parent, he's no puppet, he's no promoter, and he's no politician; he's a voice.

He's not afraid of the powers of the state or of the church. He's not afraid of the powers of the denomination. He does not seek promotion; he does not seek praise. He dares to say what others cannot say, will not say, or at least do not say.

He loves his Master. He loves his Master's message and he loves those to whom his Master sends him: "*He's a voice in the wilderness.*"

Secondly: Something else about him; he's had a revelation! Like Isaiah of old Isaiah said: "*When King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord high and lifted up and his train filled the temple: And I saw the cherubims and seraphims about his throne and they had six wings; with two they covered their feet, with two they covered their faces and with two they did fly.*" They said: "*Holy, holy, holy the Lord God of hosts.*"

Then Isaiah said: "*I cried, woe is me; I am a man of unclean lips and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips.*" The true prophet of God has had a revelation; he's seen the Lord.

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Thirdly: He's seen Him in His sovereignty, in His power, in His wisdom, in His glory, in His love, in His judgment and in His wrath, in all of His attributes. He has seen the Lord, not with these eyes; he has seen the Lord with a heart of faith, with an understanding and enlightened by the Holy Spirit. He's seen the Lord.

Fourthly: He has seen himself; that he is nothing! Paul said: *"I am nothing. Who is Apollos, who is Cephas, who is Paul, just messengers by whom you believe?"* They are nothing, Paul is nothing, and Cephas is nothing. *"It's God that giveth the increase."*

He has seen himself. *"Woe is me; I am undone. I am a man of unclean lips."* He doesn't preach down to the people. He preaches to himself as much as to anyone else. He's sent a vision, a revelation. He has seen God in His holiness himself, in his inability and his own guilt and he's seen the people in their desperate need: *"I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips."*

I will tell you this about God's true prophet: he's not for sale, he's not for sale. Today, men are looking for scholars; you know that. They are looking for showmen. They are looking for socializers; if you can play a guitar and sing you can make a fortune on the religious trail. They are looking for showmen. They are looking for socializers but God's prophet is just a preacher; that's all he is. If he ever tries to be anything else, he's an embarrassment to himself and everybody else.

Today, men have discarded preaching. You don't hear preaching much today, mostly pep and promotion, programs, and this sort of thing. But God's preacher, is still a preacher and that's all he is.

Today's measure of success; (what is today's measure of success?) two words; what's today's measure of success, how many, how many? That's all, how many and how much? That's today's measure of success.

This child of God, this prophet of God, this preacher of Christ has one rule and he has one concern: have I preached the Gospel; have I sincerely and truthfully, have I exalted my Lord? Have I been true to his Word?

Have I told men the truth about God and the truth about themselves and the truth about Christ and the truth about salvation? *"Woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel."* It's not: Woe is unto me if I don't get along with the deacons or the Sunday school teacher or the choir.

"Woe is unto me if I don't preach the Gospel." It's not "woe is unto me if I'm not a popular man, if they don't like me in the community, if people don't agree with everything I say. *"Woe is me if I preach not the Gospel."*

The commission of our Lord to His preachers is *"to go into all the world and preach the gospel."* And the obedience of God's preacher is summed up here by the apostle Paul: *"we*

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preach Christ, we preach Christ: I am determined to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified."

Let's talk about preaching today! Now, three questions:

What do we preach?

To whom do we preach it?

How do we preach it?

First of all: What did Paul say he preached?

He said: *"We preach Jesus Christ and him crucified."* We preach Christ as God. We make no apologies for it. He's not just a Son of God, He is the only, begotten, well-beloved Son of the living God, co-equal with the Father: *"He thought it not robbery to be equal with God. God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself."*

An angel said to Joseph; *"Mary is going to have a Son and that Son is the Son of the highest."* He said: it's a fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy in **Isaiah 7:14** when he said: *"behold a virgin shall conceive and bring forth a Son and thou shalt call his name Immanuel which is interpreted God with us."*

In **John chapter 1** the Scripture says: *"In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God and all things were made by him and the Word, (that's the communication of God, the Word, Christ Jesus) was made flesh, that which was with God and was God was made flesh and dwelt among us."*

Recently a man wrote into me and asked me about this truth that I presenting to you right now. He said that he could understand the Father being God but not how the Son and Holy Spirit could be God.

My friend, I don't understand the trinity. I can't comprehend God; I'm not God. I just know the Bible says: *"God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit."* That's Scriptural; it's all the way through. God, to begin with, when He created man, He said: *"let us make man in our image."* That's plural.

Then, we have at the baptism of Christ; we have the Father speaking from heaven, the Son here on earth and the Holy Spirit descending upon Him in the form of a dove. *"There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Spirit."*

Our Lord Jesus Christ said: *"I'll pray the Father and he will send you another Comforter, the Holy Spirit. If I go not away the Holy Spirit of God will not come."* Christ is God.

Listen to **John 10:30**: *"I and my Father are one. The Jews took up stones to stone him and he said: many good works have I done among you, for which of these do you stone me?"* They

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said: *“We don’t stone you for good works; we stone you because you are a man and you say you are God. A man can’t be God.”* This man is, this virgin-born man, this holy one of Israel.

The demon said, *“We know who you are, you are the holy one of God.”* In **John 14** the disciples said: *“show us the Father.”* Christ said: *“Have I been so long time with you and you don’t know me, he that hath seen me hath seen the Father. Believest thou that I’m in the Father and the Father in me? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.”*

Isaiah 9:6 says: *“Unto us a child is born, a Son is given. His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The prince of peace. The government shall be upon his shoulders.”*

So, we preach Christ as God; we preach Christ as God, not just a messenger. He is God almighty. God was in Christ. **Hebrews chapter 1:8** says, (the Father is speaking to the Son) *“thy throne O God is forever.”*

Then we preach Christ the Messiah, the Christ, Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah. He was sent of the Father.

All the way through the Old Testament the Messiah was promised, prophesied and pictured, all the way through the Old Testament. Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of every promise, prophecy, and picture.

If you go back to the Old Testament and read about the Passover; Paul wrote in the New Testament, *“Christ is our Passover.”* You read about the rock in the Old Testament *“that gave forth the water;”* that rock was Christ.

Read your Bible. You will read about the manna that fell from heaven, the bread from heaven. Christ said: *“I am the bread from heaven.”*

Everything about the Messiah in the Old Testament is fulfilled by Christ in the New Testament. Peter said at Pentecost: *“God hath made this same Jesus whom you crucified both Lord and Christ.”* So, we preach Christ the Messiah.

Then, we preach Christ in his offices. He’s that prophet. What does a prophet do? A prophet reveals things. *“God spoke to our fathers by the prophets: hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son.”* He’s that prophet. *“To him give all the prophets witness.”*

He’s that priest. Melchisedek came as a type of Christ. All of those Old Testament priests were types of Christ. *“He is the great high priest.”* They are types of Christ; they are pictures of Christ.

You see, there were many priests, but only one Great High Priest, the Lord Jesus Christ. They offered the sacrifice of animals. He offered His own blood. They offered their sacrifices, and many of them he one. *“By one offering he perfected forever them that are sanctified.”*

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They offered their sacrifices in an earthly tabernacle but He took His blood to glory. We can go on and on and on. They lived and died and He ever lives to intercede for us.

We preach Christ, the work of Christ. Now, here's a brief summary of what it would take years to tell: Christ Jesus is the Surety of an eternal covenant. How long has Christ been our Representative and Surety and our Lamb? From the foundation of the world, *"He is the lamb slain from the foundation of the world."*

He's the representative of His people in human flesh. There is the first Adam and the second Adam. *"As in Adam all die; in Christ we are made alive. As we have borne the image of the earthy, the first Adam, we shall bear the image of the heavenly, the second Adam."*

"The first Adam is from the earth, earthy; the second Adam is the Lord from heaven." You see; *"as by one man's disobedience we were made sinners, by the obedience of the other man we were made righteous."* He's a Representative person.

He's our sin-offering and our sacrifice *"that God may be just and justifier."* You see, the law of God demands, it demands obedience. It must be honored. The justice of God has to be satisfied.

You see, God can't compromise His justice. God can't wink at sin. He can't just turn His back and let sin be erased while His back is turned. He must be just and He must be the justifier. He can only be both in Christ.

You see, Christ is the only Mediator. *"There's only one mediator, one God and one mediator between God and men."* Oh, ask other people to pray for you. You pray for me and I will pray for you. He prays for both of us. He's our Mediator.

God is not going to speak to you or me either one except through Christ. *"There's one mediator between God and men the man Christ Jesus."* He's our coming King.

His redemptive work is the sum and substance of the Gospel. *"Without the shedding of blood there is no remission."*

I asked this question from our pulpit the other day. I know the Israelite people do not any longer offer animal sacrifices do they? No they don't.

They claim to believe the Old Testament but they don't believe in the New. They claim to believe the Old Testament but they don't believe that Christ is the Messiah.

I ask this question, why aren't you offering sacrifices like their fathers did? You are keeping a day, the Sabbath Day. But now, wait a minute!

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There was a high priest in the Old Testament and there was a tabernacle. There was a lamb slain. The Scripture tells us that a man couldn't come to God without blood; *"without the shedding of blood there is no remission."*

When Abraham and Isaac started up that mountain, Isaac turned to his daddy and he said: *"here's the wood and here's the fire; where's the lamb?"* If we are going to worship we've got to have a lamb.

I'm saying to you my friend; I don't care who you are: "you say that you do not believe that Jesus Christ is the Messiah, you do not believe that He is the sin-offering, and you do not believe that He is the Lamb." Then where is your lamb, where's your blood sacrifice?"

"Without the shedding of blood there's no remission." You better have you a lamb. You better have some blood because God said: *"when I see the blood I will pass over you."*

If you don't have it you are going to feel the same judgment Egypt felt. It doesn't matter who you are. Now that's so, that's so!

I ask everybody who says that they believe in God, they believe in the Old Testament but they don't believe in the New Testament. Where is your lamb, where is your sin-offering, where is your sacrifice, where is your peace offering and where's the blood? God almighty will not be satisfied without the shedding of blood.

The Christ of the manger doesn't save. The Christ of the Judean hillsides and the Galileans seashore, and the Christ of the healing power cannot save apart from the cross. That's right! It's the cross; it's Christ on the cross, its Christ shedding his blood:

**"There is a fountain
Filled with blood
Drawn from Emanuel's veins.
And sinners plunged
Beneath that flood
Lose all their guilty stains."**

Second: To whom do we preach? We preach to sinners and that means everybody. We preach to sinners: *"all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. All we like sheep have gone astray. We have turned everyone, every one of us."*

You are a sinner and you need a Saviour. I preach to sinners. I preach to sinners of every age, and I preach Christ to children. If I could find me a man as old as Methuselah I'd tell him: *"without the shedding of blood there is no remission."* I would tell him to seek the Lord. I would tell him to look to Christ.

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I have preached to sinners of every rank. If the Queen of England and the President of the United States were listening to this program today I would tell them one thing: *“the blood of Jesus Christ God’s Son cleanseth us from all sin.”*

If I’m talking to not only the high and mighty but if I’m talking to the low and forgotten, I will tell him the same thing, my lowly friend; Christ is the Saviour of sinners. You need to look to Him, and believe on Him.

He died to put away our guilt. *“He died that God may be just and justifier.”* To sinners of every rank and to sinners of every station, whether in the pulpit or in the pew, whether they are in good works or in the gutter, whether they are in religion or out: Christ saves and Christ alone.

To sinners of every sort, or even to the drunkard, the harlot and the atheist, I say: *“Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, Christ the Lord: There’s none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.”*

My friend; I preach the Gospel to sinners and I say to you: your need will never be greater. Someday it will be more evident but not greater. You need Christ now.

Your heart will never be more sinful. Someday it will be harder but not more sinful. Your inability will not ever be more certain; only clearer but never more certain.

Your time to repent will never be better, only shorter, because the Scripture says: *“now is the accepted time; today is the day of salvation:”*

**“Let not conscience
Make you linger
Nor a fitness
Fondly dream,

All the fitness
God requireth
Is to feel
Your need of him
To feel your need of him

Come ye sinners
Poor and needy
Weak and wounded
Sick and sore

Jesus Christ
Is able to save you
He’s full of pity
Love and power.”**

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I'm telling you this: God doesn't owe you anything. Don't you come with any pride, station, rank and arrogance to the living God. You come as a sinner seeking mercy. God doesn't owe you anything.

I'm not telling you that salvation is a simple plan if you accept Jesus. I'm telling you this: God is able to save and God will save. God is going to save some people. It may not be you but God is going to save some folks.

He has mercy. He said: *"I will be merciful to whom I will. I will be gracious to whom I will."* He doesn't owe you anything.

That old leper came to Him and said: *"Lord, if you will, you can make me whole."* The Canaanite woman came to Him and said: *"Lord, have mercy on me."* The Publican in the temple cried, *"God be merciful to me a sinner."* The thief on the cross said, *"Lord, remember me."*

I'm saying, you seek the Lord, come empty handed, come stripped, come broken but come to Christ. Salvation is in His hands!

Third: How do we preach this Gospel, boldly, with simplicity, with affection and with success? He said: *"My Word will not return unto me void."* God is going to take this message today and bless it to somebody's heart for His glory!