

# **WE PREACH CHRIST CRUCIFIED**

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**1 CORINTHIANS 1:23-24 • TV041A**

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By

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## **1 Corinthians 1:23-24**

*“But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, 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 Bibles to the book of **1 Corinthians chapter 1:23-24**.

My subject today is: **“WE PREACH CHRIST CRUCIFIED.”**

Now listen to Paul in **1 Corinthians 1:23-24**, he writes; *“But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, unto the Greeks foolishness (or sheer nonsense), but unto them that are called both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.”*

Now there’s just one of two attitudes that a man can take toward the cross of Jesus Christ, (the cross of substitution, the cross of sacrifice, the cross of the sin-offering) just one of two attitudes that any man can take toward the cross of Jesus Christ and all that it implies.

First of all: Either its pure nonsense, as Paul said, *“Foolishness to the Greek”* or else it’s *“The power and the wisdom of God.”*

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Now that's what he said in **1 Corinthians 1:18**: *"For the preaching of the cross to them who are perishing is foolishness, but unto them which are being saved it (the preaching of the cross) is the power of God."*

Now I know why the preaching of the cross of Christ, the cross of substitution, the cross of sacrifice, the cross of sin-offering; I know why its foolishness to the unbeliever. I know why its foolishness to the man who's perishing.

First of all: It's foolishness to him because it deals with a subject in which he has no interest!

It deals with salvation from sin. He has no interest in salvation from sin because he is not convinced that he is a sinner. That's what some told the Master when He was here on the earth. They said, *"We be not sinners."*

And you won't find well people hanging around the doctor's office. Our Lord said; *"The well have no need of the physician. I am not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance."*

And the reason the cross of substitution and the cross of shame and the cross of sacrifice is foolishness to them that are perishing is because they do not see their need of a cross. They do not see their sins.

They're not convinced that they're sinners, that they're ill-deserving, undeserving, hell-deserving sinners in the sight of a Holy God. So, the cross to them is foolishness.

Secondly: The reason why the cross is foolishness to them who are perishing is because the cross does not recognize human merit, but it drags human merit and human dignity out into the light of God's Holy law and pronounces it guilty.

In **Romans chapter 3:19** the Scripture says; *"Let every mouth be stopped and all the world become guilty before God."* And the reason the preaching of the cross is to those who are perishing, foolishness, is because it does not recognize human merit but pronounces our, *"righteousnesses as filthy rags."*

Now my friends, when a man acknowledges the need of a cross, when he acknowledges the need of a sin-offering, when he acknowledges the need of a sacrifice, he takes sides with God against himself, against his sins, against all human righteousness, and he's ready to declare with the apostle Paul; *"There's none righteous, (not in the pulpit or the pew, not in the church, or in the world) there's none righteous, no not one. There's none that understandeth. There's none that seeketh after God. They're all together become unprofitable."*

The preaching of the cross is to those who are perishing foolishness because it deals with a subject in which they have no interest, salvation from sin. And it denounces human merit. It drags it out into the light of the broken law and says; *"guilty, guilty, guilty."*

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Now, another reason why the preaching of the cross is to those who are perishing foolishness is because it has to do with declaring the righteousness and holiness of God.

Have you ever asked this question? “How can God be just and justify me?” Have you ever asked this question? “How can I, an unclean sinner, be just and righteous in the eyes of a Holy God?”

If you cannot see the exceeding sinfulness of sin, if you cannot see the infinite holiness of God, then you cannot see the need of a cross to justify God’s holiness and justify God’s righteousness and the preaching of the cross to you is foolishness.

There’s no need for the cross. There’s no need for the shame of it or the suffering of it or the sin-offering of it or the sacrifice of it. There’s no need for it.

Why did Jesus Christ have to die? Well; *“To those who are called, (now watch this) the preaching of the cross to those who are perishing is (nonsense, sheer nonsense) foolishness.”*

They see no need of it. They have no need of it. They don’t see the righteousness of God, the holiness of God, God having the need of it, to be just and justify folks like us.

But to those who are called; now I want to pause right there. Will you look at your Bible a moment, in **1 Corinthians 1:23**; *“To those who are called.”*

The Scripture says in **Romans 8**; *“Whom He foreknew He predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son: And whom He predestinated He called. And whom He called He justified and whom He justified He glorified.”*

God called somebody and those are the people we are talking about here in **1 Corinthians 1:23-24**. *“To those who are perishing, the cross is foolishness.”* To those who are being saved or whom have been called of God, Paul identified his conversion in that way, he said; *“God called me by His grace, God who separated me from my mother’s womb and called me by His grace.”*

The old-timers use to talk about a general and an effectual call. Now the general call is the warning that goes out to all men. There are many ways in which the general call is extended, nature, providence, judgment, the law, and the preaching of the Gospel.

But this effectual call is accompanied by the power of the Holy Spirit, the power of the new birth, the power of regeneration. This effectual call, this invincible call, and some say, “This irresistible call” is the call of the Holy Spirit to God’s sheep.

Christ said, *“My sheep hear my voice. They hear my voice and they follow me.”* And they hear His voice because He gives them a special, effectual, call. *“And to those who are called; now to those who are perishing the cross is foolishness.”*

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They see no need of it. They cannot see their sins and their guilt. They cannot see God's holiness and righteousness, and therefore, there's no need of a cross. *"But to those who are called, the preaching of the cross is the power of God and the wisdom of God"* because first of all, they see their sins. With this effectual call of the Holy Spirit, with this regenerating work of the Holy Spirit, with this new birth comes the knowledge of sin.

Listen to some of the great men of God; David, listen to David, *"My sins are ever before me."* Listen to Job, *"I abhor myself. I repent in sackcloth and ashes."* Listen to the apostle Paul, *"O wretched man that I am."*

Listen to Daniel, *"My comeliness melted into corruption."* Listen to Isaiah, *"I am a man of unclean lips."* Where'd these men find this out? How did they discover their sinfulness, their wretchedness?

How did they discover their guilt before God? With that effectual call of the Holy Spirit came eyes to see and ears to hear, and a heart to understand.

The disciples said to our Lord one day; *"Why do you speak to the multitude in parables?"* He said; *"I speak to them in parables because they've got eyes but they cannot see. They've got ears but they cannot hear. Hearts they have but they do not understand. Blessed are your eyes, they see. And blessed are your ears, they hear. Flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but my Father which is in heaven."*

And when the Holy Spirit quickens a dead sinner, He gives life to a dead sinner, because they are one of the sheep of Christ; He gives him eyes, not only to behold the glory of God, but to see his own wretchedness and His own sinfulness.

He gives him ears not only to hear the voice of God but He gives him ears to hear the holy law of God, the holy law of God which condemns him and breaks his heart and humbles him and brings him down to the dust at the feet of Christ.

With that effectual call comes a knowledge of sin. If you have not seen sin in its right relationship to God's law and to God's holiness and if you have not been convinced of your sin, not only outward but inward, not only the sin of commission but omission, not only the sins of your hand but of your heart, not only the sins of your acts but your attitude, not only the sins of means but motive; if you have not seen that, you have not been the object of God's effectual call.

And not only comes the knowledge of sin but a knowledge of God's holiness. Eli said this over in **1 Samuel**; *"If a man sin against God who shall stand for him, who shall entreat for him?"*

Those who are called know one thing; they need a Saviour. Those who are called of God know that they're sinners and they need a ransom. In the book of Job; one of those men said to Job, (was it Elihu) who said, *"Deliver him from going into the pit. I have found a ransom?"*

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That's what a man who's called of God knows. He needs a ransom. He needs a Redeemer. He needs a Mediator. Righteousness says; "With these scales of holiness and truth I have weighed man and found him wanting. I've tried him, and I've found him lighter than vanity itself. I not only have found man destitute of all that God requires but I have found him in full rebellion and enmity against a Holy God."

Righteousness says; "Man cannot be justified at the expense of the holy law of God. Man cannot be justified at the expense of the righteousness of God. To do so would retract all that God has said. God's righteousness must be honored. God's law must be justified."

And those who are called also know this. Listen, God's love speaks, love and mercy answers righteousness. And love and mercy declares; "*But O Lord; thou art plenteous in mercy. O Lord thou art love.*"

Is there not a way? May not a ransom be found? May not an atonement be offered? Can one be found who can be the mediator between God and men? Can one be found who is without sin whose character is such that he can bear the wrath of God and satisfy the holiness of God?

Is there not one who can be identified with men, numbered with the transgressors and at the same time be identified with God so that He can put away sin by the sacrifice of himself and rise from the tomb and live to plead His wounds and claim His reward?

If such a one can be found; surely His name shall be called "*Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, and the Prince of Peace.*" Yes, there's one, yes there's one. His name is Jesus Christ.

What did the song writer say?

**"Is there anyone who can help us?  
Who can give the sinner peace?  
When his heart is burdened down  
With pain and woe?  
Who can speak a word of pardon?  
That affords a sweet release  
Whose blood can wash  
And make us white as snow?"**

**Yes, there's one, only one,  
The blessed, blessed, Jesus; He is the one:  
When afflictions, sin, iniquity, presses the soul  
And waves of trouble roll  
And you need a friend to help you  
He's the one."**

*"Deliver him from going down into the pit. I have found a ransom."*

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Now, the preaching of the cross; *“We preach Christ crucified.”* That’s what Paul said and I hope that’s what we can say. We don’t preach about Christ; we preach Christ. We don’t preach about the Gospel; we preach the Gospel.

We preach Christ crucified to the unbeliever, to those who are perishing. To the wise and prudent of this world its foolishness. It’s foolishness because it deals with a subject of which they have no interest, salvation from sin.

It discourages and brings down human righteousness and human merit and puts it in its proper perspective, guilty, filthy rags, unacceptable by God. It justifies the holiness of God and the righteousness of God.

But to those who are called, the preaching of the cross of Jesus Christ is the power of God to cleanse us from our sins and the wisdom of God to justify His holiness and His righteousness. It is the power of God and the wisdom of God.

We know who died on that cross. We know why He died on that cross. And I want to give you in the closing moments of this message four reasons why Jesus Christ died on that cross. You take your Bibles and follow with me, will you?

We preach Christ crucified, to some I know is foolishness. And I understand why; you believe it is foolishness. To some, it is the power of God to remove all sin of which we are definitely conscience and aware.

It’s the wisdom of God to justify His holiness and His righteousness. And I’ll tell you why.

**The first reason** is this; He died on the cross that the Scripture might be fulfilled.

Now you turn first of all to **John 19:28** and read that or mark it or write it down. *“After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst.”*

He’s on the cross, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled said; *“I thirst, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.”*

Here’s another one in **1 Corinthians 15:1-3**. Paul’s talking about the Gospel which he preached and he said; *“How that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures. He was buried and rose again according to the Scriptures.”*

What Scriptures are we talking about here? We’re not talking about the New Testament. We’re not talking about Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts, Romans, and 1 and 2 Corinthians. Those Scriptures were not written when He spoke these words, *“That the Scriptures might be fulfilled.”*

He said, *“I thirst.”* Those Scriptures weren’t even written. We’re talking about the Old Testament. Now some people can’t even see Christ in the Old Testament.

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And my beloved friends; the Old Testament is Christ in picture, it's Christ in prophecy, and it's Christ in promise. That rock is Christ. That manna is Christ. That brazen serpent is Christ. That ark is Christ.

Now, if you will turn to **Luke 24:27**, listen to this; *“And beginning at Moses and all the prophets; (that's beginning at Genesis) Jesus Christ expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.”*

This trail of blood that ended at Calvary started in the Garden of Eden. When God almighty slew an animal and used its skin to cover the nakedness of Adam and Eve; that's a picture of God covering our sins and covering our nakedness with the death of Christ.

This trail of blood that ended at Calvary began in the Garden of Eden and continued outside that Garden when Abel brought the blood sacrifice and put it on the altar and God accepted his sacrifice.

And this trail of blood continued on the doorpost in Egypt when they slew the lamb and put the blood up there on the lintel and the side posts. And God said; *“When I see the blood I'll pass over you.”*

That animal blood had no power to cleanse anybody's sins. How could anyone think that the blood of an animal could justify the soul of a human being? But that blood represents Christ's blood.

That atonement represents Christ's atonement. And it followed an unbroken line of atonements and Passovers and unbroken line of sacrifices until Christ our Passover died on that cross. And He declared, *“It's finished.”*

What's finished, all of these types, all of these pictures, all of these prophecies, all of these promises? Jesus knowing that all things were now fulfilled that the Scripture might be fulfilled said, *“I thirst.”* All things were accomplished.

**Hebrews 10:14** says; *“By one offering He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified.”* So, Jesus Christ died on that cross to fulfill the Scriptures.

If you will read the Old Testament you'll find that the time of His death is prophesied, the place of His birth in Bethlehem, His disciples, the forsaking of His disciples, the denial of His disciple, (Judas) even the price for which Judas sold Him is in the Old Testament.

When they plucked out His beard; that's in the Old Testament. His cries from the cross; *“My God why hast thou forsaken me; they cast lots for my garments”* and the soldiers at the foot of the cross; that's all in **Psalms 22**.

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The very words that the people said around the cross are in the Old Testament. It's all right there. The Lord Jesus Christ expounded to them in all the Scriptures beginning at Moses and going through the prophets the things concerning Himself.

Get acquainted with the Old Testament and you'll get acquainted with Christ. Our Lord said to the Pharisee; *"You search the Scriptures for in them you think you have life. But they are they which testify of me."*

Now He wasn't talking about the New Testament. It wasn't written then. He was talking about the Old Testament. *"They testify of me. Moses wrote of me. To Him give all the prophets witness."* He died that the Scriptures might be fulfilled.

**Secondly:** He died, it says here in **Titus 2:14**; *"He gave Himself that He might redeem us from all iniquity."* **Isaiah 53:5** says; *"He was wounded for our transgressions. He was bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement of our peace was upon Him and by His stripes we are healed."* **1 John 1:7** says; *"The blood of Jesus Christ God's Son cleanseth us from all sin."* David wrote; *"Happy is the man to whom God will not charge sin. Happy is the man to whom God will not impute sin. Happy is the man whose sins are forgiven."*

I know the death of Christ justified God's holiness. I know the death of Christ honored God's law and I thank God for that and I rejoice in that. But I'm telling you this; the thing that makes me happiest is that His blood puts away my sins. That's right!

The Scripture says; *"They're blotted out."* The Scripture says; *"They're cast into the depths of the sea."* The Scripture says; *"God will remember them no more."*

Can you think of God forgetting anything? It seems impossible that God can't learn anything because God knows all things and God certainly can't forget anything. But God said this; *"Their sins and their iniquities I'll remember no more."*

**"There's a fountain filled with blood  
Drawn from Emanuel's veins  
And sinner's plunged beneath that flood  
Do what? Lose all their guilty stains."**

In Christ there's no judgment and no condemnation. The Scripture says; *"He will present you faultless before His throne of glory."* In Christ we are holy, unblameable, and unreprouvable. *"Though your sins be as scarlet I'll make them as white as snow."*

Wouldn't you like to hear the Lord say to you right now, "thy sins be forgiven thee?" Wouldn't that be great? Well, that's what He says to everyone who trusts and believes in and receives Christ because by His death and by His blood it says, *"He redeemed us from all iniquity."*

**Thirdly:** He died that He might be Lord!



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Listen to **Romans 14:9**; *“To this end Christ both died and rose and revived that He might be Lord both of the dead and the living.”*

Now it’s true that Jesus Christ bought the world. Yes sir; it’s His. God almighty has turned everything over to Christ. That’s right! He is the heir of all things.

*“He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God hath highly exalted Him and given Him a name which is above every name that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.”*

But this Scripture is referring to His Lordship over His people, both those who are living and those who have gone on to glory, both the living and the dead. He is our Prophet. He is our Priest but He’s also our Lord and our King.

And the Scripture says; *“He died that we should not live unto ourselves but that we should live unto Him who died and rose again.”*

**Fourth:** now last of all; *“He died that He might show the exceeding riches of His grace; (that’s right), that in the ages to come;”* that’s in **Ephesians 2:7**, *“That in the ages to come He might show, (demonstrate, reveal, manifest, put on display) the exceeding riches of His grace, in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.”*

I’m going to answer some questions for you right here; listen to this carefully. This is the end or goal of God permitting man to fall. That’s right, I can’t explain all of this now, but I know it’s so.

This is the goal; this is the end of God permitting man to fall, that in the ages to come He might demonstrate His grace. This is the end of God permitting the world to continue in rebellion, that He might reveal or demonstrate the riches of His grace.

This is the end of Christ coming into this world, becoming flesh, and dying on a cross *“That in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace.”*

This is the end of the cross and redemption and the calling of the Holy Spirit and the saving of the lost, *“That He might show the exceeding riches of His grace.”* We are objects of His grace. God almighty saved you to the praise of the glory of His grace.

I want you to read **Ephesians one** and read the whole chapter. And it tells about the work of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit in redemption. And when it describes the work of each one, at the conclusion of that description it says, *“To the praise of the glory of His grace!”*