

## **Christ Crucified, The Council of God**

Sunday, September 24<sup>th</sup>, 1989

### **1 Corinthians 2:1-2**

*“And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.”*

My message will be taken from First Corinthians 2: verses 1 and 2. What I am dealing with today, is this subject: “CHRIST CRUCIFIED, THE COUNCIL OF GOD.” In other words (by the title I am saying this); when we preach Christ and Him crucified and all that it involves, we preach all the council of God.

No doubt, the apostle Paul is the preacher’s pattern. I’m sure that is so. The apostle Paul was the apostle to the Gentiles. God miraculously called him, gifted him and honored him with unusual revelations. God used this man Paul, to write 14 of the 27 books in the New Testament. He is without a doubt the preacher’s pattern.

Then, if he is the preacher’s pattern, his message and his ministry should be studied carefully. We ought to study his ministry, study his methods and study his message. We ought to study the apostle Paul because God blessed him and God used him as He has used no man since. The apostle Paul was used mightily of God. I do know this; there is no way that you can briefly sum up the ministry of such a man; that is impossible. You can’t sum up the ministry of the apostle Paul. You can’t sum up his message and ministry in just a few words.

Paul made two statements about his ministry and message. One was to the church elders at Ephesus and the other to the church at Corinth (which I believe gives us an understanding of his message). You take these two statements. He gathered the elders from Ephesus and spoke to them, saying; *“For the last time.”* He made a statement in that message. Then in his letter to the Corinthians, the First Epistle, he made another statement. When you put these two together, you have some understanding of this man’s ministry and message.

The first statement in Acts Chapter 20, when he was speaking to the elders, he said this; *“I take you to record this day that I am pure from the blood of all men. For, I have not shunned to declare unto you all the council of God.”* I will tell you this, no man can hold Paul responsible for his damnation; He said, *“I am pure from the blood of all men.”* Because, in his message and in his ministry, he said, *“I have not shunned to declare unto you all the council of God.”*

He said, “I have not shunned, out of the fear of men. I do not fear men; I fear God. It is not because of covetousness or the love of money. I don’t desire for approval or ambition. I charge you with that, this day, nothing has kept me from preaching the full purpose, council, and redemptive glory of Almighty God.”

Paul said, “This is the last time you will see my face; this is the last time that I will preach to you. I want you to understand this, I preached the Word of God without fear, without covetousness and desire for approval.” *“I have kept back nothing profitable unto you. I haven’t shunned to declare unto you all that God has taught me.”*

He made this statement, which he made to the church at Corinth. Listen to this carefully in the opening statements of Chapter Two in First Corinthians. Paul said, “And I brethren, when I came to you preaching the Word of God, all the council of God, and the testimony of God, I didn’t come preaching in a clever, intellectual, witty or showy way, declaring unto you the testimony of God. I came not with great oratory or great intellectualism or cleverness. I wasn’t trying to draw attention to myself.”

*“For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and Him crucified. That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men (my wisdom) but in the power of God.”* In other words, Paul is saying, “I preach and I have not shunned to preach for any reason all the council of God. I haven’t backed down, I haven’t refused, and I haven’t hesitated to declare all the council of God.” That is summed up in this, *“I am determined to preach nothing among you, save Jesus Christ and Him crucified.”*

So, when we preach Christ and Him crucified and the cross of Christ, we preach all the council of God. For all that God Almighty has purposed, decreed and planned for sinners and the sons of Adam, is in Jesus Christ and Him crucified. It is all there, all of it.

You may ask me, “Well, preacher, how can we preach all the council of God by preaching Christ and Him crucified?” How in the world can that be done? If you preach the cross, if you preach Christ and Him crucified and preach all the council of God, how can that be done? Well, I’m going to show you today; I’m going to show you how that by preaching the cross and preaching Christ and Him crucified, you preach all the council of God in regards to sinners. I’m talking about all the council of God.

All right, if you want to, get a pencil and paper and jot these things down. You might want to refer back to them again or refer back to the Scriptures.

Number One: *“We preach Christ and Him crucified.”* If we preach the cross of Christ, we must preach the eternal purpose and council of God, the eternal will of God that gave birth to the cross and the death of Christ. If you want to start preaching the cross of Christ, you don’t start at Bethlehem or Jerusalem or in Pilot’s Hall; you go clear back to the foundation of the world.

You see, the cross and death of Christ was no after thought of God. The Scripture says, *“For Christ was the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world.”* What happened at Calvary and what happened at the cross, was purposed and planned by Almighty God before the world began. That is what the Scripture says in Revelation 13:8. It talks about the blood of the Lamb, slain before the foundation of the world. In other words, before there was a sinner, there was a Saviour.

Before man fell, God made Christ and God chose Christ as our Saviour and our Surety. Paul carries this theme into the Book of Hebrews. He says, *“Christ is the Surety of an everlasting Covenant,”* a Covenant that has no beginning or ending. It is an everlasting Covenant. He said, *“Christ is the Shepherd of the Sheep through the blood of the everlasting Covenant.”* This is not the covenant of works. It wasn’t the covenant given to Moses or Abraham. It was the everlasting Covenant.

Watch this, *“Known unto God are all His works from the beginning. God declares the end from the beginning.”* We were chosen in Christ, the crucified Christ, before the foundation of the world. So, if you preach the cross and the death of Christ and His crucifixion, you have to go back to where it started.

You see, when the angel’s fell, they fell before men. The angels fell before the world was created. The Scripture says, *“God has reserved the angels in chains of darkness, everlasting chains of darkness, unto the judgment of that great day.”* When they fell, they perished.

When Adam fell, he was the one who represented all men. *“In Adam we died. By one man’s disobedience, we were all made sinners.”* Why didn’t we all perish then? Why didn’t God put us immediately in everlasting chains of darkness with no hope? The reason is because we had a Surety. *“Christ was the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world.”* Christ was the Lamb provided in the purpose and council of God before man fell. That is what the Scripture says. *“He was the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world.”*

So, when Adam fell, God preserved him and kept him. Out of Adam's race there were a people for whom Christ would suffer and die on the cross for. When you preach the cross of Christ, you have to go back to the everlasting councils of God.

Secondly: If you preach the cross of Christ, you must preach the fall of men. For if men are not sinners, there is no need for Christ to come into the world and die such an ignominious, terrible and horrible death. It says, *"This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance; that Christ came into the world to save sinners."*

If we are not sinners there is no need for Christ to come. There is no need for Christ to die. But in Adam, we died. By Adam's death we died. *"In Christ we are made alive."* By Christ's death we live. By Adam's death, we die. It is by Christ's death that we live. *"He died, the Just for the unjust that He might bring us to God."* Do you see this?

When you preach the cross, in the cross of Christ, our sinfulness is revealed. Oh, the great sinfulness of sin. Paul called it, "The exceeding sinfulness of sin which sent God's Son to the cross." The inability of man is revealed. The certainty of judgment is revealed. God's wrath against sin is revealed nowhere like at Calvary. So, if you preach the cross of Christ, you must preach the fall of man. You must preach the inability and the corruption of man and the judgment that rests upon us. There is a curse of that broken law.

Thirdly: If you preach the cross of Christ, you must preach the Holiness, Righteousness and Justice of God, which required the death of Christ for sinners. You see, my friends; this is why Christ died on the cross.

I heard a preacher on television recently and he was trying to tell us why Christ didn't come down from the cross. The crowd said to Him, "Come down from the cross and we will believe you." The preacher said something like:

"Well, Christ didn't perform miracles of that nature to present Himself to people. He didn't turn the stones into bread and so forth, at Satan's command. Christ Jesus didn't come down from the cross because He was submissive to the will of God. Christ Jesus didn't come down from the cross because of His love for us."

Let me tell you something, Christ hung on that cross as a Representative, as a Federal-head, as the Surety of a people. He hung there because God is Holy and God must punish sin. God is Righteous and His Law and Justice must be honored. God is Just and *"The soul that sinneth must die. Jesus Christ bore our sins in His body on the tree. He was*

*numbered with the transgressors.*” He bore our sins. *“He was made sin for us.”* He had to stay on that cross because He was guilty.

Christ had no sin of His own. *“He knew no sin, and did no sin.”* He was a Substitute. *“He took our sins and He had to die in order that God might be just and justify the ungodly.”* You see, God said; *“I am a Just God and a Saviour.”* He sent His Son to be a sin offering that He might be just and justify.

The main reasons that Christ stayed on that cross are:

1. He is our Representative.
2. He bore our sin.
3. The judgment and wrath of God fell on Him in our place and stead.
4. If He came down from the cross, He couldn't be our Saviour.

He would not honor God's law or He would not honor God's justice or satisfy God's justice. Do you see that?

God can't compromise His character. Christ must die. He must suffer. He said, *“As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so, must the Son of man be lifted up. Christ must go to Jerusalem and suffer and die.”* He was our Saviour. There is no other way.

There is no other way that a Holy God can be just and justify a sinner except for a sinner to be punished in that sinner's Substitute. Now, that is so!

When you preach the cross of Christ, you preach the Holiness of God. I know a lot of people, when they talk about the Holiness of God and the wrath of God against sin; they preach to you the blood. This is true. They will tell you about Sodom and Gomorrah, which is true. They will tell you about hell and eternal punishment, which is true.

Nowhere, I mean nowhere, will you see the Justice and Righteousness and Holiness of an Almighty God like you see it at Calvary. That is His Son on the cross. That is God in human flesh. That is *“His only begotten.”* He is hanging on that cross. Why? The reason is because God is Just. God will punish sin. He was wounded for our sins, our iniquity and our transgressions. He bore our sins and He died in our place. He must die or He can't save anyone. So, you preach God's Holiness.

Fourthly: If we preach the cross of Christ, we preach the Deity and Glory of Jesus Christ. You see, that which made His work effectual and sufficient before the throne of God is

His person, who He is. It is not just the death on Calvary, but the important thing at Calvary is who died. It is not just the blood that was shed. I know, *“Without the shedding of blood, there is no remission,”* but it is whose blood was shed. It is who died at Calvary and whose blood was shed at Calvary.

Somebody asked the question, “How could one man die for so many?” It is because of who He is. That is what Paul is saying in Romans 8:34. He asked this question, *“Who is He that condemneth? Who can lay anything to the charge of God’s elect; it is God that justifies.”* Then he said, *“Who can condemn me; it is Christ that died.”* It is who died. *“Yea rather, it is Christ that is risen again. It is Christ who is at the right hand of God. It is Christ who intercedes for us.”* Jesus Christ is a man, but He is God. He is the God-man. *“God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself.”*

In John 1:1, the Scripture says; *“In the beginning was the Word.”* In verse 14, it says; *“And the Word was made flesh.”* In John 1:1, it is quoted; *“And the Word was with God.”* In verse 14, it says; *“He dwelt among us.”* It says in verse 1, *“And He was God. In the beginning was the Word. He was with God; He was God and we beheld His glory. The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld His glory.”*

That is who is on that cross. It is the very, Son of God. *“His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.”* That is what gave efficacy to His sacrifice. That is what gave sufficiency to His offering. It is who died! Can you see that?

If you preach the cross, you preach the eternal council of God. You preach the fall of man. You preach the Holiness of God. If you want to take anybody to where they can see these things, take them to Calvary. Take them to the cross to see the Holiness of God. They will see the Deity of Christ. How can one man shed His blood and die a short period of time, one day on a cross, and redeem people from all generations? It is because of Who is He!

Fifthly: If we preach the cross of Christ, we preach the fulfillment of every promise, prophecy and picture of the Old Testament. We preach the fulfillment of all 39 Books in the Old Testament. Listen to Luke 24; listen to our Lord, He says; *“These are the Words which I spake unto you that all things must be fulfilled which are written in Moses, in the Prophets and in the Psalms, concerning Me.”*

*“Then He opened their understanding that they might understand the Old Testament Scriptures.”* Then He said, *“Thus it is written and thus it behooved Christ to suffer and die and rise again the third day.”* That is what the Old Testament is all about. When

you preach the cross, you preach the fulfillment of all the Old Testament pictures, promises, patterns and prophecies.

You see; the Old Testament has no meaning or message apart from the cross of Christ. That's right! There is no meaning or message. How do you explain the woman's seed bruising the serpent's head, without the cross? How do you explain Abel's sacrifice different from Cain's, without the cross? How do you explain the Passover Lamb without the cross? How do you explain Noah's Ark without the cross?

What about deliverance from judgment? How do you explain the Tabernacle? What does it mean? What does the Priesthood, and the Mercy Seat mean? What is the Mercy Seat? It is a covering or propitiation, an atonement for sin. What is atonement without the cross of Christ? How do you explain the atonement without the cross of Christ Jesus? How do you explain the smitten rock or the serpent lifted up? How do you explain any of these things without the cross of Christ?

*"Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures."* Anywhere that you turn in the Old Testament it says, *"To Him give all the prophets witness."* That is the reason that Paul said, *"I'm determined to know nothing but Christ and Him crucified."* When I preach Christ and Him crucified, I preach the whole council of God from eternity past.

Sixthly: If we preach the cross of Christ we preach the love of God for sinners. Where do you see the love of God demonstrated as now where else? *"Greater love hath no man than this that he lay down his life for his friends. God commended His love toward us that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."*

*"Herein is love."* Do you want a sermon on love, God's love for sinners? Here it is, *"Herein is love."* How plain can you get? *"Herein is love, not that we love God but that He loved us and gave His Son to be a propitiation, a mercy seat, and a covering, for our sin."*

Where was He given? He was given on the cross. Nowhere is the love of God so evident as at Calvary. *"Nothing can separate me from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus my Lord."* So, if you preach the cross, you preach the most effective illustration God has ever given of His everlasting, unchanging love for sinners. *"Having loved His own; He loved them to the end, even the cross."*

The seventh thing: When we preach the cross of Christ, we preach full justification by faith and not by works. In other words, Jesus Christ my Lord represents you and me before the law of God and before the justice of God. We are justified before the throne of

God. In His life He fully satisfied that law, even in His death. If He fully satisfied that justice, then I have nothing to pay. I have nothing to do but believe.

You see, *“In Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily and I am complete in Him.”* Jesus paid it all, all the debt I owe. I can’t add anything to what He did, especially when He said, *“It is finished.”* He went to the right hand of God and sat down. The Scripture says, *“He was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement of our peace was upon Him and by His stripes we are healed.”*

*“Salvation is a gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast.”* Salvation is by the grace of God. Salvation is free. *“Therefore, being justified with God, we have peace. There is no condemnation to them who are in Christ.”* Paul said in Romans, *“I conclude that a man is justified before God by faith and not by works.”* If Christ died and paid all of the debt, then there is nothing for me to pay. There cannot be any works involved. Do believers work? Sure they do, but *“Faith worketh by love.”* Believers work, serve and labor because they love Christ. It is not to obligate the Lord.

Then, if we preach Christ crucified, we preach the preservation and the final perseverance of all of whom He died for. He can’t fail. He said, *“My sheep hear My voice and they follow Me. I give them eternal life and they shall never perish. All that My Father giveth Me shall come to Me and him that cometh, I will in no wise cast out.”*

No, Christ can’t fail! The blood of Christ cannot be without effect. He cannot be disappointed. *“He shall see the travail of His soul and be satisfied. By His knowledge shall My Righteous Servant justify many. And the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand.”* He cannot fail. So, we will be kept. We will be preserved and we will persevere.

If we preach the cross of Christ, we preach His resurrection. Consequently, we preach our resurrection. He must die if He is raised. You can’t preach resurrection unless Christ died. If you preach that He died, you can’t leave Him in the grave. He has to be raised. He said, *“Because I live, you live.”*

Christ is resurrected and *“Has become the first fruits of them that sleep.”* What are first fruits? That means that there are many fruits to follow. We shall rise also. We preach our own resurrection when we preach the cross. Christ paid the debt, put the sin away, and was buried as our scapegoat and rose again.



If we preach the cross of Christ, we preach the Holy Spirit's work. Christ said, *"When He's come, He won't speak of Himself. He will glorify Me. He'll take the things of Mine and show them to you."* What are *"the things of Mine?"* This means His death, His burial, His resurrection and His exaltation. That is what He is going to show you. That is what gives you confidence and hope.

If we preach the cross of Christ, we preach the holiness of believers and the righteous walk of believers. *"You are not your own; you are bought with a price; therefore, glorify God."* Why am I not my own? Christ bought me. He bought me with the price of His blood. *"Therefore, glorify God in your body and in you Spirit which are His."*

Lastly in closing, if we preach the cross of Christ, we preach His return. The angels stood after Christ was resurrected and had ascended to glory and said to His disciples, *"This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven shall so come in like manner as you have seen Him go."* Our Lord said, *"I have gone to prepare a place for you; I will come again."*