

SALVATION IS IN CHRIST ALONE

1 CORINTHIANS 2:1-5 • TV046A

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1 Corinthians 2:1-5

“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 anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.”

My subject today is: **“SALVATION IN CHRIST ALONE.”**

I’d like for you to take your Bible and turn with me to **1 Corinthians Chapter 2**. I’m going to read with you the first five verses of **1 Corinthians Chapter 2**. And Paul is writing here and he says:

“Brethren, when I came to you I came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom declaring unto you the testimony of God, (the Gospel of God). For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. And I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man’s wisdom but in demonstration of the spirit and of power that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.”

Now, the city of Corinth was a city of people who admired oratory and eloquence. It was an age of intellectualism, philosophers, and much human wisdom. And Paul was entering that great city to preach to these people.

SALVATION IS IN CHRIST ALONE

1 CORINTHIANS 2:1-5 • HENRY T. MAHAN

Now the temptation would exist in any man's mind, a man going there to preach to them would think along this line, it would go something like this, he would say to himself; "Now these people have been hearing the great orators" (and they have). The city of Corinth was a city of orators, intellectualism, philosophers, and people who were educated.

He'd say: "Well, they've been hearing these great orators. If I would be a match for these people then I must speak with great effect; I must speak with poetical eloquence."

Or, he would think something like this: "These people are very educated. They are very wise people. If I'd be a match for their philosophers and for their intellectual people then I must demonstrate my wisdom and demonstrate my knowledge."

"And these people are philosophers and they understand the theories and the principles of religion. If I were to appeal to them, if I were to appeal to their philosophical minds then I must also demonstrate my thinking ability and my eloquence and my intellectual powers."

"After all, this is the way human nature reasons; after all we must win the confidence of people and the approval of people and the admiration of men if we're to influence them for Jesus Christ."

Now my friends, this is natural reasoning. But this is nothing in the world but the deceit and subtlety of Satan. Paul wrote again to this church at Corinth and he says: "*I'm afraid lest Satan and in his subtlety (in his deceitfulness) should take your minds away from the simplicity of Christ.*"

And both preacher and people must steer away from this type of reasoning. When Paul entered this great city, when he contemplated going into the city of Corinth to preach the Gospel; this is what he said: While going to that great city of learning and philosophy and orators, he said: "It's my firm determination, it's my firm determination; I am determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified."

"For this I know; if any of you are brought to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ, if any of you are brought to a living, vital, union, with God almighty; it's not going to be through excellency of speech. It's not going to be through man's wisdom and man's logic and man's reasoning. It's not going to be through enticing or persuasive, words. If any of you are brought to a vital union with a living God, it's going to be accomplished by the Spirit of God and by the power of God using the Gospel of Jesus Christ and Him crucified."

That's the reason he said this, he said, "*When I came to you I came not to you with eloquence of speech. I came not to you with enticing and persuasive words of man's wisdom, but I came to you in the demonstration and power of the Holy Spirit that your faith should not stand in man's wisdom but in the power of God.*"

"*And brethren; when I came to you I came in weakness and in fear and in much trembling determined to know nothing but Jesus Christ and Him crucified.*"

SALVATION IS IN CHRIST ALONE

1 CORINTHIANS 2:1-5 • HENRY T. MAHAN

Now Albert Barnes once said this; “This should be the resolution of every preacher of God. This is his business to preach Christ and Him crucified.”

It is not the preacher’s business to be a politician. It is not the preacher’s business to be a philosopher. It is not the preacher’s business to be a scholar nor a community leader, nor a jokester, nor an entertainer.

It is his business, it is his glory, and it is his divine calling to preach the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ the Lord to sinful men. God’s preacher will not be ashamed of that humbling message of; ruined by the fall, redemption by the blood, and regeneration by the Holy Spirit.

I believe that an honest, God-called preacher of the Gospel of Jesus Christ will be guided by three things. I believe every honest, God-called preacher of the Gospel will be directed in his ministry by three things:

First of all: He will preach what God’s Word declares!

When God sent these Old Testament prophets He would say to them before they went to the people; “*Declare unto them thus saith the Lord.*”

When Paul wrote to young Timothy he said; “*Preach the Word, (preach God’s Word). Give attention to reading and to doctrine. Present to those people the Word of God.*”

We want no new revelation; we want His revelation. We want no new truth; we just want His truth. We want no dreams and visions; we want a, “*Thus saith the Lord.*” My friends; it’s plain in the Scriptures. Christ said; “*I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man cometh to the Father but by me.*”

And if a preacher wants his hearer to come to the Father he’s going to have to preach the way, and that way is Christ. And Peter wrote; “*And we know that we’re not redeemed with corruptible things such as silver and gold from our vain conversation received by tradition from our fathers but with the precious blood of Christ as of a lamb without blemish or spot.*”

So, if the preacher wants his hearer to be redeemed he’s going to have to preach the blood of Christ, “*Thus saith the Lord.*”

Secondly: He’ll be directed by this; he’ll be guided by this; he’ll not only preach the Word of God but the preacher who is called of God and sent of God will preach what he believes in his heart.

I’ve heard men say. “Well, I believe such and such but I don’t dare preach it because it would offend people and it would divide the church and it would cause trouble in the church. I believe

SALVATION IS IN CHRIST ALONE

1 CORINTHIANS 2:1-5 • HENRY T. MAHAN

this. God's Word teaches this. I believe it, but I can't preach it to my congregation because it would divide the church and it would cause trouble."

Nonsense; that's nonsense! A man of God will preach what he believes, whatever the cost. It doesn't matter what it costs him. He cannot, he cannot preach that, except that which he's seen and that which he's heard, and that which he's experienced.

And like the apostles, they declared, "It's better to please God and to honor God and to hear God than to please men." Paul said, "*If I please men I'm not the servant of Christ.*" Men who really believe the Gospel will die for the Gospel if that's what it takes.

I remember reading a story from church history. It made a great impression upon me. When King Henry the VIII was in power there was a chaplain in the royal court by the name of Hugh Latimer.

Hugh Latimer later on was burned at the stake. He died for what he believed. He was a faithful minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. He gave his life for the Gospel which he preached.

But anyway, while he was still ministering in the court of Henry it was his task one Sunday morning to preach to the court to Henry and to all of his captains and all of his leaders of state and the people of the crown.

There was a great host of people gathered in that royal hall to hear Chaplain Latimer. Hugh Latimer stood that Sunday morning and he preached. He preached man's total ruin. He preached the sinfulness of the flesh.

He preached God's power and sovereignty. He preached God's grace through Jesus Christ. He preached salvation by the blood and not by human works. He preached God's mercy through Christ. He preached holiness, the holiness of the life of a believer.

And when he finished the king was angry. And the old preacher departed and went down to his quarters and someone came down there. The king sent one of his men down to see him and the old preacher was sitting there and the messenger of the king said to Hugh Latimer:

"Henry the VIII was angry, the king was angry because of your message. And he sent me down to tell you that you must realize before whom you stand; you stand before the sovereign, his sovereign majesty, Henry the VIII who has the power to take your life and destroy you."

"Now, the king's going to give you an opportunity next Sunday morning to speak again and he feels sure that you'll correct some of these observations that you've made in your message this morning." And the messenger left.

Well, next Sunday morning the court was assembled again and the powerful, sovereign, monarch Henry the VIII was sitting on his throne surrounded by all of his people. And this great old

SALVATION IS IN CHRIST ALONE

1 CORINTHIANS 2:1-5 • HENRY T. MAHAN

warrior of the Gospel, this man called of God to preach, Hugh Latimer, stood in front of the sovereign majesty Henry the VIII and he said as he opened his sermon:

“I’ve been told that I am to be permitted to speak again this morning, to correct some of the observations that I made in my message last Sunday morning. And I’ve been reminded by his majesty Henry the VIII that I should remember before whom I stand that I stand before the sovereign, royal, majesty, the king of England, Henry the VIII, who has the power to take my life.”

And he said, “I’m aware of that but I’m also aware before whom I stand, the King of kings and Lord of lords; His sovereign majesty the Lord Jesus Christ, who not only has the power to destroy my body but to destroy my soul in everlasting hell. And I must preach what He sent me to preach. I must preach it. Not only because He commanded me to preach it but because I believe it in my heart.” And he went right on and preached the same message that he preached the Sunday before.

Now a man of God, called of God, sent of God, will preach what God tells him to preach and he’ll preach it whatever the cost because he believes it, not only because God sent him to preach it but because he believes it.

Thirdly: A man of God who is sent of God will preach what men need to hear.

Now this is important. The preacher who is in tune with God and who is in tune with his congregation will preach what the people need to hear in that day. He knows what they need to hear; God reveals it to him. He knows what his congregation needs to hear.

He’s going to preach a contemporary message. He’s going to preach a message dealing with the issues. He’s not going to avoid the issues and skirt the issues and preach on something that is not applicable to his congregation.

God does not send a messenger to men on the brink of hell to recite poetry and to entertain them in their dangerous position. But he sends that messenger to cry; “*Flee from the wrath to come. Save yourself from this perverse generation.*” It’s an alarming message.

And then, God almighty does not send the messenger to religious Pharisees to brag on their flesh and to brag on their works and to brag on their self-righteousness, but He sends a messenger to deal with their need, to deal with their problem and to cry:

“O ye whited sepulchers; you appear beautiful to men on the outside but on the inside you’re full of dead men’s bones. Who hath warned you to flee the wrath to come?”

God does not send a messenger to preach the dignity of men, but the greatness of God. God does not send His messengers to preach the dignity of the flesh but the power, greatness, glory, sovereignty, and grace of almighty God to the miserable, to the guilty.

SALVATION IS IN CHRIST ALONE

1 CORINTHIANS 2:1-5 • HENRY T. MAHAN

What shall I cry? He said; *“Cry O prophet, cry O man of God.”* He said, *“Well what shall I cry?”* The answer comes back; *“All flesh is grass and the goodness of man is the flower of the field and the grass withereth and the flower fadeth because the spirit of God bloweth upon it. But the Word of God abideth forever.”*

Yes, a man who is sent to preach will preach the gospel. Paul was going to this city of eloquence and this city of philosophy, this city of intellectualism, and this city of political power, and he said: *“I’m determined.”*

He could have known other things. He was one of the most educated men of his day, one of the most brilliant students of his day. He graduated from the highest university of his day. He’d sat at the feet of Gamaliel, but he had been called of God. And he had been anointed of the Holy Spirit and he had been sent of God to preach the Gospel.

Intellectualism is not the Gospel. Enticing words of man’s wisdom is not the Gospel. Philosophy is not the Gospel. The Gospel is, *“Christ and Him crucified.”*

And he said, *“I am determined, I am determined.”* And Paul met these three requirements. He preached *“Thus saith the Lord.”* He said, *“When God saved me I went to Arabia and I stayed there three and a half years and God taught me the Gospel. He taught me His Word.”*

And then he said this; he believed the Gospel. Paul said; *“I know whom I have believed, and I’m persuaded that He’s able to keep that which I’ve committed to Him against that day.”* He believed the Gospel.

Peter, James, John, and the other men said; *“We must preach what we’ve seen. We must preach what we’ve heard. We dare not preach anything else.”*

And then Paul knew what men needed to hear. He knew; he said, *“I’m determined to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ and Him crucified.”*

That’s what you need to hear. Guilty sinners need to hear about the pardoning grace of God. Guilty sinners need to hear about the mercy of God through the righteousness of Jesus Christ. That’s what they need to hear.

They need to hear that Christ died for sinners. Paul said; *“Moreover brethren, I declare unto you the Gospel which I preached to you and which you received and by which you’re saved and wherein you stand.”*

This Gospel is; *“How that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures. And He was buried and rose again the third day according to the Scriptures. And He ascended and is seated at the right hand of God interceding for us according to the Scriptures.”*

SALVATION IS IN CHRIST ALONE

1 CORINTHIANS 2:1-5 • HENRY T. MAHAN

Now, I want to draw three conclusions in bringing this message to a close, in wrapping up this message on salvation in Christ alone, Christ and Him crucified. I want to draw three conclusions and I want you to listen to this and take notes on it if you'd like to:

First of all: If Christ the Son of God, the living Lord of glory, came down here to this earth sent by the Father and died for my sins, if Christ died for my sins, how great must be my sins, how great must be my sins.

If it took the death of God almighty in human flesh to put away my transgressions, oh how great must be my transgressions. Paul realized this he cried, "O the exceeding sinfulness of sin." Have you ever viewed your sins in the light of Calvary's cross? I don't believe a man can see the greatness of sin except he sees it in the light of the death of the Son of God.

Now, we've seen our sins in the light of Sinai's law. We've seen our sin in the light of that perfect law of love, that perfect law of holiness and purity. And as we see our sins in the light of God's Ten Commandments we are made to cry with Isaiah; *"I'm a man of unclean lips and I dwell among a people of unclean lips."*

We realize our sins in the light of the law of God and we're convicted of them, God's law that says; *"Thou shalt have no other god before me. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain. Thou shalt not kill. Thou shalt not steal. Thou shalt not commit adultery. Thou shalt not covet. Thou shalt not bear false witness."*

We see our sins in the light of this holy law of love and righteousness, and holiness, and we're made to realize that we're great sinners.

But also we see our sins in the light of conscience. That's right, in the light of conscience. *"The things I would do I do them not. And the things I would not do, I do."* And we're made to cry with Paul; *"O wretched man that I am."*

"My conscience felt, and owned my guilt can plunge me in despair." We see sin not only in the light of Sinai's law but in the light of our conscience. And our conscience smites us and grieves us and convicts us and we're made to cry; *"O wretched man that I am."*

And then we see our sins, we view our sins, in the light of God's love. Sin against law is one thing. Sin against love is greater. And I see how good God has been to me, how good God has been to you. His loving providence has given me blessing upon blessing. Just take the blessing of being born in this nation, to be an American. That's the blessings of God's loving providence to have food, clothing, shelter, health and mercies of God more than can be numbered.

We have the mercies of God upon us more than can be numbered and I have to cry with David, "Who am I and what is my house that we should be so favored by God almighty," all of His loving providence and gracious, tender, care? Oh, how He has blessed us.

SALVATION IS IN CHRIST ALONE

1 CORINTHIANS 2:1-5 • HENRY T. MAHAN

And this convicts us of our sins. We ought to love Him more. We ought to praise Him more. We ought to exalt His loving, gracious, name more than we do. We ought to be delivered from ingratitude and an unthankful heart.

Nowhere do I see my sins like I see it when I stand at Calvary's cross and I see the Son of God dying for my transgressions, for my iniquity and the chastisement of my peace was upon Him.

There the perfect Son of God; is spit upon and hated and humiliated and crucified. There the Son of God is besieged by the forces of hell. There the Son of God is turned over into the hands of wicked men. There the Son of God is dying under the wrath of the Father, why?

It's because of my sins. Oh how God must hate sin, how God must hate sin. Somebody said, "God hates sin worse than He hates hell because He built hell upon sin." How terrible must be our sins if they sent Christ to the cross.

**"Oh can it be upon that tree
The Saviour died for me?
My soul is thrilled, my heart is filled
To think He died for me."**

If you want to see sin and the exceeding sinfulness of sin, the awful evil of sin, and how God hates sin; don't go to Sinai's mountain. We have to go there first, that's true. Don't go to the court of human conscience. We are there often.

And don't go even; don't go even to the loving providence of God. We need to go there but go to the cross and sit down and realize who it is dying on that cross and why He's dying on that cross for my sins and for your sins. How God must hate sin.

Second: Now, the conclusion of observing the cross is this; If Christ died for my sins how great must be God's love for sinners. God so loved; now think about this, we recite this verse of Scripture; it comes so easy because we have committed it to memory but *"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son."*

He gave the jewel of heaven. He gave the choice diamond of heaven's glory; He gave His Son. God so loved that He gave. You will never know the love of God for sinners until you understand the cross of Calvary, the death of the Son of God.

Have you ever been to Calvary? Have you ever looked with your heart at that cross? What love, what mercy. I see God's love in creation. You know, David exclaimed; "How wonderfully I'm made." How wonderfully everything is made, made by the loving kindness and hand of God.

Scarred by sin, marred by sin, yes, but still, we're attaining a measure of His image, beautiful, the love of God, to give us what He is given us in this world, even though, marked by sin. Look how beautiful it is. That's love.

SALVATION IS IN CHRIST ALONE

1 CORINTHIANS 2:1-5 • HENRY T. MAHAN

I see God's love in predestination. Oh, that covenant of mercy, that covenant of grace that would not let a world go to hell that determined to save a people out of Adam's race for His glory, to save a people out of Adam's race for the glory of His Son.

God in His covenant of mercy from before the foundation of the world chose a people to make them like Christ. That's love, the love of the covenant, the love of predestinating mercies.

And then I see God's love in providence:

**“Through many dangers, toils, and snares
I have already come
His grace brought me safe thus far
His grace will lead me home.”**

God keeps me day by day. He meets my need day by day.

I see His love in His loving providence. I see His love in my conversion on my Damascus Road to hell. He called me, He arrested me, and He stopped me. He revealed Christ to my heart.

The love of God in conversion: “He would not, O love that would not let me go. I cast my weary soul on thee.”

But if you want to see the love of God you go to Calvary. But God commended His love toward us in that while we were good people, no sir, friends of His, no sir, someone to whom He was obligated, no sir, enemies, enemies in your mind, strangers, foreigners, without God, without hope, traders, God-haters, while we were enemies Christ died for us.

**“Oh the love that drew salvation's plan
Oh the grace that brought it down to man
Oh the mighty gulf that God did span
At Calvary.”**

Christ the eternal Son of God, Christ the omnipotent, God of glory, Christ the well-beloved, only begotten Son of God died, was humiliated, cursed, despised, rejected, nailed like a common criminal on a cross for my sins, for my sins. Not for His; He had none!

**“I stand amazed
In the presence of Jesus the Nazarene
And I wonder how, how, He can love me,
A sinner condemned, unclean**

**How marvelous, how wonderful
And my song shall ever be
How marvelous, how wonderful
Is the love of God for me**

SALVATION IS IN CHRIST ALONE

1 CORINTHIANS 2:1-5 • HENRY T. MAHAN

**He took my sins and my sorrows
He made them His very own
He bore the burden to Calvary
And there He suffered and died alone**

**How marvelous, how wonderful
My song shall ever be.”**

And it won't be any other song. It won't be with enticing words of man's wisdom. It won't cover up the mercy and the grace and the love of God under intellectual clichés and words of enticing, man's enticing words of wisdom.

It will be just this:

**“How marvelous, how wonderful
And my song shall ever be
How marvelous, how wonderful
Is the love of God for me.”**

In closing: If Christ died for my sins how sure is my redemption? If He bore my sins I don't bear them. If he died my death there's no death for me to die. If He paid my debt I don't owe it. If Jesus Christ suffered in my place then the justice of God and the righteousness of God is fully satisfied.

Can you find a better way? God says; *“There's none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.”* Can you find a more certain way? *“He that spared not His own Son but delivered Him up for us all; how shall He not with Him freely give us all things?”*