

True wisdom from preaching Christ crucified

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[0 : 01] I ask your attention to the first epistle, Paul to the Corinthians, chapter 1, verses 22, 23 and 24.

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For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom. 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. For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom.

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[1 : 34] The letter that is written here was written five years after the account we read in the 18th of the Acts.

There was a good reason, if we should use the right word there, or the right meaning of that word.

Good purpose, perhaps, in the apostle writing to them, because he had something to say to them, to correct them, to correct them of their folly, and to establish the bedrock truth upon which the church at Corinth was built.

As we read in that chapter, there was a mixture of characters. Corinth being a very busy place in those days. Goods and, I suppose we might call today, exporting to east and west, flowed from that great city of Corinth.

And it was a place of much wealth, a place of much evil also. But it was there that the apostle went to preach.

[3 : 03] And, of course, when you preach the truth, even today, as it was in those days, you will always find contention. And the Jews, of course, were the first to contend against Paul for his preaching.

And they called it contrary to the law of God. But the preaching must continue whether men will hear or whether they will forbear.

And it struck my mind when I first looked at these words yesterday. Which are we today?

Are we Jews? Or are we Greeks? Or are we among them that are called? Because we're one or the other, my friends, today, or I trust in life's journey.

The Jews require a sign. I think I might write in saying that if you can find it in the Gospel of Luke, that the Lord Jesus Christ spoke to them about that.

[4 : 17] And he said, No sign shall be shown you but the sign of the prophet Jonah. The Jews require a sign. And the Greeks seek after wisdom.

I do say this to you, dear friends. If the Lord so exercises your soul, that you so seek a sign, and you so seek wisdom, may it be the sign and the wisdom that is found in Jesus Christ.

Now, in a certain sense, my mind went then to the 86th Psalm, and David said to the Lord, Show me a token.

Now, that's a sign. If you are graciously led, you will seek a sign from the Lord, an evidence from the Lord, a token from the Lord, that you're amongst his blood-washed people.

Signs and wisdom, which these two nationalities sought for, were not such blessings. I suppose it must be surely well known that the Greeks, in those days, they were the center of wisdom, and they contended for wisdom.

[5 : 42] But there is a wisdom which is not of God. Blessed be God, there is a wisdom that is of God, and that wisdom, that knowledge, that profitable wisdom and knowledge, shall be found in everyone who seeks for and desires after Christ.

The Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom. But there is something better, and something more Christ glorifying, that I trust and believe, is found in every believer, that is better than signs and wisdoms.

My friends, it is this, the grace of faith. Because grace, the grace of faith, will have a blessed object.

Signs and wisdom may satisfy nature. grace, the grace of faith, will be made a blessing to your soul.

For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom. In so much as the sign and the wisdom, is a God-given gift, of the Holy Spirit's teaching to your soul, it will have one effect, and one effect only.

[7 : 10] It will make you wise unto salvation. It will be the signs, the tokens, the evidences, of your eternal life. But that is only as it is, of the Holy Spirit's, blessed work.

That which is letter, or formality, or duty, which is found in the signs, and the wisdom, of the Jews and the Greeks, will lead sinners away from Christ, and not to Christ.

For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom. And it may please the Lord, that you may have come to chapel, with the exercise in your soul, respecting your standing, in this blessed, essential truth of Christ, that you've asked for a word, from the Lord, that it may confirm you, as one of his people.

Now that's a sure sign. There were signs, there are signs in the word of God, God send signs, at the birth of Christ, at the incarnation of the Savior, there was a star in the heavens.

That was a sign, and it led them to where Christ was. And it is an evident, of the teaching of the Holy Spirit. That star in the heavens, never to be seen again, was the leading of God, to the stable at Bethlehem.

[8 : 45] What will lead a sinner to a Savior? Dear friends, what will be only by the Holy Spirit's influence and teaching? For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom.

Whoso is wise, now that's a blessed company of people, whoso is wise, and will observe these things.

Have you such wisdom? Has God given you the wisdom to see the need of salvation in and through Christ crucified?

Is this the cry of your heart, the burden of your soul? Is this the often request in your petitions and prayers?

Then God has made you wise. And bless God for that wisdom. The wisdom of God is greater than the wisdom of men.

[9 : 46] We read, Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. God is so pleased to quicken you by his spirit.

He has given you a wisdom which the world don't possess. All the wisdom of the world, used rightly, used on behalf of our fellow men, well, may the Lord make use of it and bless it.

But a wisdom that leads away from God and Christ, and a wisdom which is only for time, brings no comfort on a dying bed, brings no joy in the soul as it departs into eternity.

But if God gives you his wisdom, and this very chapter concludes, But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, if he gives you this blessed wisdom, what else he denies, it will be a blessing for time, it will be an eternal comfort in heaven at last.

Well, may you and I be separated from a religion that rests on signs and words, of which is not of God. But may the exercise of our blessed Redeemer, the exercise of our soul be to our Redeemer, and for him.

[11 : 23] And the exercise here of the dear apostle should surely be the work of every believer in Christ, and indeed every minister of the gospel, whom the Lord has sent into the world to preach.

For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom. They are still with us, these Jews and Greeks. They are prevalent in our day.

They are everywhere and in all things. They may be religious, but they have a Christless religion. And having a Christless religion, they have no comfort for eternity.

But the Lord help us now to leave them alone, let them go their way. May you and I be delivered from such exercises that lives on signs and wisdoms of men.

And look now at these words, which are of essential mercy to our poor soul, that we preach Christ crucified.

[12 : 43] It is, and it should be, and it ever must be, the substance of every preaching, every gospel sermon. But with one difference, that 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.

With one exception, I say, that we do not preach the letter. I suppose we might give credence to this, that in nonconformists, and perhaps in other places, in the Christian church, or those that would have themselves to be Christian churches, there is in a certain sense the preaching of Christ crucified.

It would be a poor man that stood up and never mentioned Jesus Christ, would it not, who is in some form of Protestant religion or nonconformist gathering, with the one exception, the Lord deliver us from preaching letter.

the Lord keep us from such things. When there is to be a true preaching of Christ crucified, that it may be not letter, but experience.

I believe, dear friends, and I believe it solemnly, that there are many satisfied with a head knowledge of Christ crucified.

[14 : 41] They would agree that they are sinners. They cannot but agree truly, can they? And I do believe that they rest on the letter of the truth of Jesus Christ and him crucified.

They therefore say, in effect, if not in words, as I am a sinner, and Jesus Christ the Saviour, therefore it is well with me.

Now that won't do, my friends. That won't do. That's a hollow gospel. That is the form without the power.

That is the letter without the experience. That is the knowledge without the revelation. You and I can read of Christ crucified.

You and I can read about that mankind is nothing more than a sinner. We can all read those things. I suppose just one of us would contradict that truth.

[15 : 49] But this dear man didn't preach Christ crucified out of his head. but out of his heart. If you read his conversion as it is written in the ninth chapter of the Acts, when the Lord, by his sovereign grace, made known the ways of salvation to Saul of Tarsus, he did so in that most remarkable life and episode and way.

But as he was delivered, when his eyes fell from his eyes as it had been scales, and he received sight, forthwith, and arose and was baptized, and when he received meat, he was strengthened.

And then was Saul, certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus, and straightway he preached Christ. Now what did he say?

Says, the word of God doesn't tell us what he says. What he said. What was it that was the substance of his preaching? And again, I believe, further down in verse 22, that Saul increased and more in strength and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is the very Christ.

When the eunuch was in a sense of ignorance of the word of God, and sitting in his chariot, traveling, in that desert place, the apostle was constrained by the spirit to join himself to that chariot.

[17 : 39] And he took with him understanding. Not a book, not a catalogue of reason, not at all.

He took with him understanding and experience. And he said, understandest thou what thou readest? And he said, how can I accept as some man should teach me?

And so he invited the apostle into the chariot. And Philip began at the same scripture and preached unto him Jesus.

Not that he was born of Mary. I'm sure that came into it. and not that he had a most remarkable and blessed birth, and I'm sure that came into it.

But he was a man who was reading of the sufferings of Christ, of those dreadful sufferings of Christ for sinners.

[18 : 47] and that need explaining. And the person who can explain the sufferings of Christ are those who have been delivered from the powers of sin and brought into the comfortable hope of an interest in the suffering of Christ and his salvation.

for the Jews require a sign and the Greeks seek after wisdom. There is something, dear friends, I say it in all reverence, there is something that an angel can't do and it can't preach the gospel because it has no knowledge of the truth of the gospel in experience and in their understanding.

they fly at God's command, we read, of angels. They preserve and protect the people of God, we read, of angels.

But they don't preach the gospel. But we preach Christ crucified. And with that knowledge of which is imparted by the Holy Spirit, it is a knowledge which is learned by experience.

Such that preach the gospel in the letter have not the experience. But if you and I have been taught to the Spirit, if you and I have the knowledge of Christ, we have first the knowledge of ourselves, and then we have the knowledge of Christ Jesus in that wonderful work of salvation, the work of redemption, the work of atonement, made known to us.

[20 : 49] If you've ever been convinced of your sin, by the blessed Spirit of God, you will have taught you, in some measure, the preaching of Christ crucified.

because in the teaching of the Spirit in conviction, there is the knowledge of sin, the knowledge of the fallen state of mankind, and your own poor heart particularly.

But in the knowledge of salvation, it is as the person of Christ crucified is revealed to you, first in the want of him, in the desire of him, and then blessedly the revelation personally to your soul of his work on your behalf.

But we preach Christ crucified. Oh, only sinners can preach this word. Only sinners.

It is a most great subject, it is a most deep subject. My dear friends, it's the most essential knowledge. Oh, let nothing else be preached from this pulpit.

[22 : 08] Oh, may it be kept close to this blessed truth, the preaching of Christ crucified. Because of this, and there will be many purposes in this word this morning, but because of this, it removes the merit of man.

When you look, and when you are able to look by faith to the crucified one, you overlook, and if you excuse that expression, you lose sight of man and all his abilities.

This is not the wisdom of the Greeks. This is not the experiences of the Jews. This is the experience of a sinner called by grace, and Christ and Christ crucified is the healing virtue that is desired, is the remedy that is sought for, for that malady of sin.

For we preach, Christ crucified, opposed by the Jews, set at naught by the Greeks.

The wisdom of this world can't understand it. The most wisest of men miss the point, sin, and that by a great distance.

[23 : 30] But poor sinners taught by grace, led by the Spirit, revealed into their soul by the Blessed Spirit, understand this most sacred truth, that here we have the person of Christ crucified for sinners.

We preach Christ crucified. Unto the Jews a stumbling block. And not only Jews, but you and I too.

Unto the Jews a stumbling block. My friends, what is to be needed, what is to be granted to you and I to believe in this blessed person, and to believe in his blessed work, to trust in his great salvation, to rest, upon that which he has done?

Well, my friends, grace and faith surely is needed. But why the stumbling block? Why is it described here by the Apostle that Christ is a stumbling block to the Jews?

Well, because the Jews have been brought up on a covenant of works. That is why. Because in believing in and trusting upon Christ crucified, he is believing and trusting what has been done by the Lord Jesus Christ for his people at Calvary.

[25 : 02] It is taking away this dreadful sin of man and any desire of man to put his hand to God's work.

work. I say it again, I've said it before, and I don't apologize for everything I keep repeating. But my friends, I have to come in with good top lady.

if you and I are followers of believers in this blessed person, desiring after the knowledge of this blessed person crucified, you have to come where he came.

And he wrote that lovely hymn and said, nothing in my hand I bring, simply to thy cross I cling. That is where you must be brought when you come to see that salvation is in this blessed person the crucified one.

But we preach Christ crucified. I do believe, my friends, we must know our helplessness. We must know our inability.

[26 : 20] It's not believe and be saved in the letter of it. It's believe and be saved in the faith of it and in the experience of it.

To believe that Christ Jesus in your room and place instead has done it all. But we preach Christ crucified.

Well, what did he say of it? Well, the time's nearly gone, we haven't begun. What did he say of Christ crucified? Well, he would have been reminded of the apostle John who wrote, for God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son.

And what did he give his only begotten son for? My friends, that he should be the sinner's surety. that he should stand before a holy and a just God in heaven and take their sins upon himself and suffer in their place and their stead a sacrifice for sin.

God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whosoever believeth in him shall not perish. this is the blessed effect of the work of faith and grace in the soul, in the crucified person of Christ.

[27 : 58] It's the believing in him and that is where your soul would desire to rest. But we preach Christ crucified as the son of God and the son of man, as the incarnate gift of God to the church, as the one that went to the end of the law, that broken law, that went to the end of it, honoured it, fulfilled it, and brought it, indeed brought about a righteousness for his people, which is theirs by imputation.

We preach Christ crucified. I do find, my friends, that it is a preaching that is not received today.

If you stand, and you will never stand, some of you won't, the Lord does know his will and purpose, but when one stands in a pulpit week after week after week, and I'm not speaking of Zohar, but you can see the company of people who receive this blessed truth, and you can see those who don't.

When you see an indifference, when you preach Jesus Christ and him crucified, you see an indifference come across them. You can hold people's attention, you know, when you speak about miracles that the Lord has done, when you can speak about those things that have happened in your life, which is only the Lord appearing on your behalf, providentially perhaps, or spiritually, you will hold their attention when you tell them stories.

But such that not know the plague of their own heart, and such that are once again saying in effect within them, we've heard it all before, my friends, you can see it written upon them, that they have no interest, and no seeming interest or concern in this preaching, that we preach Christ crucified.

[30 : 28] To those who are condemned by their own sin, to those who are condemned by the broken law, to those who mourn over sin and distressed by sin, not someone else's, dear friends, your sin and mine, as is active in our old nature, as it reveals, as it is revealed to us, as it is shown to us, as we've made to sorrow over it, as we have been aware of it, how we have to mourn before God, how we have to walk the path of the publican, and plead that God will be merciful to us as a sinner, the preaching of Christ, my friends, is the blessed remedy.

We preach Christ crucified. Oh, I would be able, if I could, preach it better, preach of his love, what heights and depths, breadth, and lengths of the love of Christ could be found.

It's beyond the wisdom of man, it's beyond the understanding of man in a natural sense. Oh, it is, the love of Christ is rich and free, fixed on his own, eternally.

Now, we must preach his love, greater love of no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Preach the wonder of his love.

Preach the wonder. My friends, if you want to wonder at his love, see who it is that enjoy his love. Find out who they are who can speak of the love of Christ in the soul.

[32 : 19] It's not the meritorious, it is not the upright, it's sinful dust, it's worms of earth, it's those who feel their inward carnality, it's in the preaching of Christ crucified, his love to his people, and it brought him from the realms of bliss, to be dressed in a body like our own, to suffer on a cross at Calvary.

We preach Christ crucified, and then it is the will of Christ crucified, the purposes of him, the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God was that he should come into the world to save sinners, but the will of Jesus Christ doesn't differ itself from the will of the Father or of the Spirit.

Remember what he said, Father I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am. Dear friends, if they are to be with him, they are those for whom he has died for.

If they are to be with him in the eternal realms of bliss, it is those for whom he took their sins away by his suffering on the cross and dying for them, for we preach Christ crucified.

Foolishness to the Greeks, stumbling blocks to the Jews, mercy, blessing, comfort, consolation and the glories of heaven at last to poor sinners, all through Christ.

[34 : 07] Though, O Christ, all I want is the poet's word and that's the words of those who seek for him, who long for him. But then we preach Christ crucified as a work that is established in the hearts of his people.

My friends, the blessed work of Christ is established. It can never be removed. It can never be changed.

People change denominations, chapels. People change doctrines if they have to. but the purposes of Christ was to save his people from their sin and it's an eternal, established foundation in God's sight and in the hearts of his people.

It can never, never be removed. Who wants he's loved, he never leaves, but loves them to the end. They can rest upon that cross and that work on the cross.

They can rest there. they can stay their very soul there. They can lay their very hope upon that cross. They have the principle of grace within.

[35 : 23] They have a place prepared for them in glory because of that cross. We preach Christ crucified. My friends, when you have a view of this person, and I trust and pray you may do, when you have a view by faith of this blessed person on a cross at Calvary, what will you expect to say?

What will you expect to say? My friends, you will find one who is the offscoring of the earth. You will find one whose visage was more marred than any man.

You will find one whose sweat, as it were, great drops of blood falling down to the ground. Oh, you will find one indeed who, bearing under the weight and burden of the work that he had come to do, was in the place of sinners, the sin bearer.

We preach Christ crucified. The bride's eyes, not her garment, but her beloved's face.

I would not gaze on glory, but on my King of grace. Not on the crown he giveth, but on his wounded hands.

[36 : 54] The Lamb is all the glory in Emmanuel's land. And I do believe this, my friends, if you have one view of Christ, it will bond you to him, it will bind you to him, it will unite you to him, and he will be to you more than any human relationship can be.

He will be dearer to you than any relationship can be. He will be your covenant love. He will be your seal for glory.

glory. You know what I've said, I must clothe, but dear friends, he will be your heaven. For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom.

But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness.

Amen. Lord, we'll end this prayer meeting Wednesday, and I hope to be here next Lord's Day.

[38 : 12] The closing hymn 752. nature with open volume stands to spread her makers, praise abroad, and every labor of his hands shows something worthy of a God.

But in the grace that rescues man, his brightest form of glory shines. Here on the cross, it is fairest drawn in precious blood and crimson dines.

hymn 752. Hymn 752. Let's go.

Let's go.

Let's go. Let's go.

[41 : 15] Let's go. Let's go. Let's go. Let's go. Let's go. Let's go.

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[42 : 15] Let's go. Let's go. Let's go. Let's go. Let's go. Let's go.

Let's go. Let's go. Let's go. Let's go. Let's go. Let's go.

Let's go. Let's go. Let's go. Let's go.

May our Lord be the skies with you. O Lord, only as we look at such a word as this do we know how short we come, both in the preaching of it and in the knowledge of it.

But Lord, thy blessed spirit has been sent and that spirit's work is to take of the things of Jesus and reveal them unto us.

[43 : 44] This we pray thou wilt do. Lord, forgive all that's been amiss and bless the word. Bring us again to it this night.

Gather with us, Lord. Lord, make one in our midst. May the blessed spirit, O, store up in our soul those things of Christ that we might know by revelation and experience.

And now be with us as we take our journey home. Keep us from danger seen and danger unseen. To may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God the Father and the fellowship and communion of the Holy Spirit remain with us each, both now and forever.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. ane Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[44 : 57] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.