

# We Preach Christ Crucified

July 7<sup>th</sup>, 2019

Our text for today is found in First Corinthians chapter one. Follow along with me as I read:

✓“We preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to the Gentiles. Yet to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ is God’s power and God’s wisdom.” 1 Corinthians 1:23-24

What a world we live in – we think we are getting wiser – but I wonder if that is really the case. There is no doubt that technology has just blossomed over the last few years. It has advanced at a mind-boggling rate – but have we become any wiser?

Men boast that they are wise – but who can understand the wisdom of God? ✓“We preach Christ crucified, ...Christ is God’s power and God’s wisdom.”

Here is the universe – the stars make its canopy – flowers and fields adorn it – water ripples in its reflective pools – and the name of God is written in the things He has laid His hand upon. The invisible things of God may be clearly seen in the things which are made. But wisdom is not found in the creation but in The Creator. “We preach Christ crucified, ...Christ is God’s power and God’s wisdom.”

Philosophy does not make you wiser – but knowing Christ does. God says, “I give you all the mysteries of the universe – but all you really need is Me. Find Me. Ask for Me. Search for Me. Seek and ye shall find. Knock and the door shall be opened.” And when the door is opened we shall find Christ Himself standing in the doorway.

“We preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to the Gentiles. Yet to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ is God’s power and God’s wisdom.” 1 Corinthians 1:23-24

Child-like faith in Christ shall crumble to the dust all the colossal systems of worldly wisdom. The Bible says:

✓“For the wisdom of this world is foolishness to God. As the Scriptures say, “He traps the wise in the snare of their own cleverness.” And again, “The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise; he knows they are worthless.” 1 Corinthians 3:19-20

In Christ there is wisdom – outside of Christ there is a void.

I did not come here today to preach some concepts of philosophy. I did not come up here to talk to you about sociology. I did not come here to give you a glossary of worldly wisdom. But I did come today to preach to you the truth of God’s Holy Word – that Christ has been crucified and that He is the power of God and that He is the wisdom of God unto salvation.

If I do not preach Christ and Him crucified – all I would leave you with is a message of mist and haze – a message that would have no substance and no power. On this Communion Sunday I want to preach Christ crucified.

From our text today I wish to speak on only two things:

✓1 Slide I. Christ crucified - **REJECTED**

II. Christ crucified – **ACCEPTED**

Let's start with Christ crucified – Rejected

You would think that when God sent His Son for mankind that all would listen and humbly receive the truth. We would have thought that the love of God – so intense – that He sent His son to be crucified and to die for our sins – would be whole-heartedly accepted. We would have thought that when the gospel is preached that hearts and lives are always changed because the gospel is accepted with open arms. But sadly – that is not the case.

Look at the prophets of old – how they were driven from city to city – persecuted, afflicted, tormented, stoned to death, rejected.

These same men came with hearts full of love and hands full of mercy. These men were treated as if they were spies in the camp – carriers of disease – scum of society – enemies and not friends. Do not suppose that men and women of our generation like the gospel any better now than they did then.

There is an idea in our time that we have the freedom to believe what we want to believe. But preach the fact that Jesus is The Way, The Truth, The Life and that no one comes to the Father except by Him and see what happens. Tell the world that the only way to heaven is through Jesus Christ and see how many people will stand up in protest. They will say, "How can you be so narrow minded." And "Don't force your religion on me!" Are they not protesting the crucifixion of Christ? Are they not protesting His salvation?

The human heart has not changed. Paul said, ✓**"We preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to the Gentiles."** What was true then is still true today. Fallen man has the same opposition to the truth of God today as they did two thousand years ago.

To some people the gospel is still a stumbling block – even to so-called religious people. People who pray – people who tithe – people who go to church on a weekly basis – may still see Christ as a stumbling block. If you would look them in the eye they would tell you, "All I have to be is a good person – all I have to do is be faithful to my faith and God will accept me into heaven." There is a lot to be said about faithfulness – but if you are depending on church faithfulness or being a devout person to save you – you will be highly disappointed.

It is not through a religious system that salvation comes – but only through a crucified Christ. It is not by being a moral person that a person is saved. It is not by being a pious or religious person that one is saved – but only by trusting in a crucified Christ. Is it any wonder that Christ is a stumbling block to so many? Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees – (Matt 23) who believe that your religion is going to save you when in reality – only the crucified Christ can. Is it any wonder that the scripture says: “We preach Christ crucified.”

It is not by the works of the flesh that any man can enter into the kingdom of heaven. There are those who – in a flash – would give up Christ before they would give up their father’s religion. They say: “I am a Baptist.” or; “I am an Episcopalian.” Or “I’m a Roman Catholic” Let me ask the religionist: “Will religion save you apart from a relationship with Christ?” You have a religion which you love – but if Christ asked you to move the altar one inch – would you do it? If He asked you to remove the stained glass from the sanctuary – would you still consider it a place of worship? Or – perhaps – we don’t have such a fancy place of worship – but we love this plain old meeting-house, where some of your forefathers worshipped. But if you have substituted religion in place of a relationship with Christ – beware! The only one who can save you is a crucified Christ.

Beware! Unless you have a heart right with God – you are in danger. All the external show that they put on is good for nothing. A relationship with the crucified Christ is everything. You can be externally religious – but you must have the work of the Holy Spirit in your life in order to be saved. Jesus said:

✓“Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” John 3:5-6 (NKJV)

It is not religion that saves you – but regeneration of the Holy Spirit – and that only comes through a relationship with a crucified Christ. But for many – Christ crucified is a stumbling block.

For many others – Christ crucified is foolishness. The argument is: “How could a loving God be so exclusive that He allows salvation to come only through a man who was crucified on a cross. That does not make sense. That is not logical. That is foolishness.”

Folks don’t you believe such arguments. Don’t you ignore the words of Christ Himself when He said:

✓“I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.” John 14:6 (NKJV)

The person who raises such arguments may have degrees hanging on his walls. He may like eloquence – he may have read the latest book of theology or philosophy. He may be a gentleman of the most noble character. He may be thoroughly wise by worldly standards – but he will not accept Christ crucified. He likes all learning except sitting at feet of Christ Himself. He loves everything except that which God loves. He is willing to listen to every

new fad. But you only have to tell him that God so loved world that He sent His only begotten Son Jesus and he quickly closes his ears. To him – it is foolishness.

I have met this person many a time – you may have too. It may even be a family member. He is polished. He is refined. He is totally lost – but he does not realize it. He thinks that somehow through his own effort that he will be saved – if there is such a thing as salvation. That which is written in God’s holy word is considered antiquated – totally out of date. Yet the heart of man has not changed since the fall of Adam. We all need a Savior – and God in His infinite wisdom has sent one – Christ crucified. But to many He is a stumbling block and foolishness. God’s ways have never been man’s ways. The Bible says:

✓“God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, that no flesh should glory in His presence.” 1 Corinthians 1:27-29 (NKJV)

Is it any wonder that Christ crucified is still rejected.

But enough of that – let's move on to the second point.

## II. Christ crucified – ACCEPTED

Not only is the crucified Christ rejected – He is also accepted. Remember our text says:

✓“We preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to the Gentiles. Yet to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ is God’s power and God’s wisdom.” 1 Corinthians 1:23-24

Go ahead and circle or underline the phrase, ✓“Yet to those who are called”. One man may sit and laugh at the gospel – yet there is another man who will fall on his knees in praise because of the gospel. To him – Christ crucified is glorious news. Christ shall not die for nothing. The Holy Spirit shall not strive in vain. God has said:

✓“So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.” Isaiah 55:11 (NKJV)

God calls such a man. It is like a mother who goes to the door and calls out: “Johnny come home it is time for dinner.” The son hears her voice – he recognizes her voice and he answers her call. Are you such a man? Jesus said:

✓“My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.” John 10:27-28 (NKJV)

The crucified Christ has called and there are those who will answer. It is like the call of Jesus when he said, "Mary." She heard His voice – recognized His voice and she responded, "Rabboni." Did Jesus ever call you by name? Have you ever heard His voice calling you? It is dark it is cold – sinfulness has encompass you on every side – yet just like Lazarus – you are dead and buried in the tomb of your own sin yet Jesus calls, "Come forth! Leave the old way of life. Leave your sinfulness behind. Come forth to life – to abundant life. Come! Come! Come!"

✓ "To those who are called – Christ is God's power and God's wisdom."

When He calls your name – can you withstand Him? Can you ignore Him? Yes, you have stood against the minister many a time. Yes, you have resisted the voice of your friends and family over and over again. But what will you do when you hear the voice of Christ Himself calling you? Will you respond?

Jesus was passing under a tree and there in the branches sat Zaccheus. Jesus called out, "Zaccheus you come down. Today I am going to enter your house. Today I am going to visit with you. Today your life will be changed - forever." Zaccheus heard his own name called. Zaccheus was taken in the net. Zaccheus knew his own heart – he knew his own life – he knew his own faults and failures. Yet Jesus called him by name. Zaccheus responded and salvation entered his heart. What about you? Have you heard Jesus call your name?

"To those who are called – Christ is God's power and God's wisdom."

Christ is God's power to save you from your sin. Christ is God's power to heal you. Christ is God's power to transform you. God knows you and He loves you. God loves you just the way you are – but He loves you so much – He will not leave you that way. He knows your struggles. He knows your hurts. He knows your pains. He loves you and He wants to help you overcome the struggles in your life. But folks here is a fact: He will not force Himself upon you. He will not push His way into your life. All He will do is call. What are you going to do when He calls? Jesus said:

✓ "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me." Revelation 3:20 (NKJV)

Two things are required in this verse: 1. Hear His voice. He is calling your name. 2. Open the door.

In a moment in a twinkling of an eye – He can touch you – if you will answer His call. What will you do with the call of Jesus today?