

What It Means To Preach Jesus

Introduction. When Paul first went to the Corinthians to preach to them the gospel of Jesus in Acts 18, he did not resort to the techniques used by Greek orators to lay the foundation of the gospel. He simply declared the testimony of God. He did not use "enticing words of man's wisdom" (1 Corinthians 2:4), nor did he use the "wisdom of words" (1 Corinthians 1:17). He was resolved to preach nothing to them except "Jesus Christ, and him crucified" (1 Corinthians 2:2). This is the "milk of the word" which he fed them (1 Corinthians 3:2).

Preachers and teachers should always remember these important texts in developing their preaching and teaching style. We should not try to attract people to ourselves because of our unique abilities to use flowery rhetoric, tell a heart-warming story or otherwise touch the emotions of men. Neither should we strive to make the gospel a human philosophy, reflecting man's ability to reason correctly. We should understand that the gospel is an announcement of what God has done for man; it is the testimony of God. We cannot leave people being impressed with us; they must be impressed with Christ.

Jesus Christ continues to be the central theme of all gospel preaching (Acts 5:42; 8:35; 17:3). Without Him there is no gospel, no message of salvation. A large portion of people in America do not attend worship services nor do they consider themselves "religious." These are the exact people that needs Jesus preached to them. In this lesson, we are going to examine what "preaching Jesus" really means.

I. ***We Must Preach Jesus As Our Savior***

- A. The word "Savior" is a word which means "deliverer or preserver." It is used 24 times in the New Testament and has reference to Jesus (Luke 2:11; John 4:42; Acts 5:31; Philippians 3:20; Titus 1:4) and to God, who saves us through Jesus (Luke 1:47; 1 Timothy 1:1; 2:3; 4:10; Titus 1:3).
- B. The reason we need a Savior is because of our sins (Acts 5:31). For Paul, preaching Jesus included preaching the death, burial and resurrection of Christ (1 Corinthians 15:1-4). For Paul, the world is divided into two groups: those who are being saved and those who are being lost. Those who are being saved can only be saved through Christ (Mark 16:16). No one can draw near to God except through Jesus (John 14:6).
- C. Some say, "we need to preach the man more than the plan." This is impossible, and such thinking is erroneous. The man is the plan and the plan is the man. You cannot separate the two, and you cannot preach one without the other.

II. ***We Must Preach Jesus As Our Lord***

- A. Certainly Christ is our Savior; but He cannot be our Savior and not be our Lord. All that He commands is bound up in His lordship.
 - 1. The term "Lord" is *kurios* and is used a little under 700 times in the New Testament.
 - 2. The word indicates a need for respect and obedience; and was first an adjective used to describe one with power or authority. God is also referred to as *kurios* and that implies an equal position between God and Jesus.
 - 3. In Acts 2:36 as the first gospel sermon was being brought to a final climax, Peter said that Jesus had been proclaimed as Lord and Christ. In John 20:28, Thomas proclaimed that Jesus was Lord and Christ.
- B. If you accept Him as your Savior it means you accept all He says as Lord. That means you accept His authority just as you accept His grace. When we preach Jesus, we must preach and teach about His church and the singularity of His church.
- C. A king can do whatever he wishes. He can rule wisely or he can plunder his country, subjects and resources. However, our Lord Jesus came to accomplish the greatest feat ever: the salvation of mankind (Luke 19:10; Hebrews 2:14-17).

III. ***We Must Preach Jesus As Our Guide***

- A. In order for us to return to the right way a guide is necessary (Isaiah 53:6). A guide is one who leads the way and Jesus is that guide (John 14:6). There is none other; only He is qualified to be our guide, for only He can sympathize with our needs (Hebrews 4:15-16).
- B. In the book of Hebrews, Jesus is the one who is pictured as our forerunner which is one who goes in advance to a place where the rest are to follow (Hebrews 6:20). The high priest under the Aaronic priesthood went where no man could follow, but our guide Jesus entered heaven and all men can follow.
- C. We certainly are in need of the favor that is pictured in the book of Revelation (Revelation 7:17). And He is there to be of such service.

IV. ***We Must Preach Jesus As Our Example***

- A. Jesus lived among us and was subjected to every human feeling. He is our example of every good virtue, grace and noble inclination. Without Him we have no way to know how our lives are to be lived (1 Peter 2:20-21).
- B. In order to be saved, men must turn from their sins (1 Corinthians 6:9-11). The plain implication of preaching Jesus is that one cannot practice immorality and be a child of God (Ephesians 5:25-27). A con-

scientious child of God will bear the fruit of the Spirit and not the works of the flesh (Galatians 5:19-23).

- C. So when one preaches Jesus, they must preach the necessity of moral purity and not shrink from specific condemnation of worldly and immoral conduct. We sing a great song wherein we raise our voices in praise to God and say, "He the great example is, and pattern for me."

V. ***We Must Preach Jesus As Our Hope***

- A. Jesus Christ is what keeps us afloat in the turbulent sea of life. He is what keeps us aloof from the wretchedness in which we must exist while in this world. He is the means of our sustenance in the middle of a desert which offers almost nothing to sustain us.
- B. Hope is defined as "confident expectation" and the "happy anticipation" that we will some day be in heaven with Him. God is a God of hope (Romans 15:13). How sad that some have such shallow hope on account of such small faith. How sad that some cannot know the peace of God on account of their own sins (1 Corinthians 15:19-22). What a blessed hope and what an opportunity for us to rejoice in hope (Romans 12:12)!
- C. The saints of God do not look to what pleases the body nor to the things that are popular from time to time. Their whole hope and aim is centered on the everlasting good. Their whole desire is pointed to the lasting and invisible realm, lest the love of what is visible drag them down to lower concerns and notions.

VI. ***We Must Preach Jesus As Our Judge***

- A. Those who see only the grace and mercy of Jesus have greatly misjudged His essential nature (Acts 10:42-43). In order to be God, He must not only abhor all that is evil, but He must pronounce judgment on evil doers. This is necessary to fulfill the characteristic of a "just" God.
- B. Jesus came as our Savior; He came as our Lord; He is our great hope. But the final work of Jesus, the Son of God, will be to "judge the world in righteousness" (Acts 17:31; Romans 2:14-16; Hebrews 9:27-28). Let us be impressed with His love and mercy; but let us not forget that "it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Hebrews 10:31).

Conclusion. Let us always go forth preaching the totality of God's revelation through Christ. We cannot fail to preach all aspects of "Jesus Christ, and him crucified." May God give us the strength to endure the pain of the battlefield, the wisdom to engage the enemy successfully and the loyalty to His cause to serve until the last dying breath has passed through our

nostrils. May our love for the Lord and the souls enslaved to the devil be our motivation. Let us be able to speak the same statement as Paul when we come to the end of the way (2 Timothy 4:6-8). God bless every soldier of Christ!