

Preaching Christ

"Some indeed preach Christ, even of envy and strife: and some also of good will: the one do it of love knowing I am set for the defense of the gospel, but the others proclaim Christ of faction, not sincerely, thinking to raise up affliction for me in my bonds. What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed; and therein I rejoice, yea and I will rejoice" (Phil. 1:15-18).

The eleven apostles were commanded to go into all the world and preach the gospel (Mk. 16:15). There are at least four Greek words which translators translate as "*preach*" in our English versions. The Greek word translated "*preach*" in vs. 15 is *kerusso* which signifies to "preach the gospel as a herald." Paul wrote that some preached Christ from sincere motives while others from insincerity. Nevertheless, he rejoiced that Christ was preached, whatever the motive of the proclaimer.

To "*preach Christ*" means to preach the things which both concerned Christ and the things that emanated from Him, just as it is said that Moses was preached -- meaning the things which Moses taught (Acts 15:21). We are told the twelve preached Jesus as the Messiah and preached in Jesus the resurrection from the dead (Acts 5:4; 4:2). Paul preached Jesus as the Son of God, crucified and risen from the dead (Acts 9:20; 1 Cor. 1:23; 15:12). Thus the message of preaching Christ is to preach the gospel; the resurrection from the dead; Jesus as the Messiah; the Son of God; the atoning sacrifice of Jesus. Whatever was the personal nature of Jesus or whatever He commanded men to believe and do -- these things constitute "preaching Christ."

Earlier in this letter Paul reported that the brethren in Rome, at least the greater part of them, preached boldly. He acknowledged that there were two different reasons why some preached Christ. On one hand some preached Christ of good will. But others preached Christ insincerely, of faction. I suppose that in every age men preach for varying reasons. Paul wrote Timothy that some supposed that "*godliness was a way of gain*" (1 Tim. 6). Some view preaching as a means of livelihood. These are the hirelings of whom Jesus spoken in John 10. They care nothing for the flock; they are concerned only with self. Someone has said that some preach because they have to say something; while others preach because they have something to say. Those who view preaching as a "livelihood" fall into the first category.

Those in Rome who preached Christ from faction were enemies of Paul. They hoped that by keeping the "pot boiling" and the controversies around Christ

heated as hot as it could get -- that sentiment might be turned against Paul; that his captors would make it harder on him. In Paul's words "*thinking to raise up affliction for me in my bonds.*"

But, there were those who preached out of love: love for Christ, love for God's word, love for those in sin, and certainly love for the worthy apostle who was a prisoner in their city who, if he had not introduced them to the gospel, was its strongest and ablest defender. Surely Paul felt no happiness knowing that faction, hatred, and hypocrisy moved certain ones to preach Christ. Yet he could and did rejoice that, whatever the motive that prompted it, the preaching of Christ was ongoing. He knew that to preach Christ and Him crucified was to the Jews a stumblingblock and to the Greeks foolishness, but to the saved it was the wisdom and power of God.

Paul said, "*I determined to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified*" (1 Cor. 2:2). In view of the suffering of Paul who would dare charge that his preaching was insincere or from faction? He demonstrated again and again that he would not glory "*save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ through which the world hath been crucified unto me, and I unto the world*" (Gal. 6:14). May Paul's glory be our glory!

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