

Title: Preaching of Christ Crucified

Text: 1 Corinthians 1: 23-24

Date: January 3, 2013

Place: SGBC, New Jersey

1 Corinthians 1: 23: But we preach Christ crucified,...

Subject: Preaching of Christ Crucified.

If someone asks you, what does your pastor preach? This is our answer: we preach Christ crucified. If they ask, "What else?" You say, "Nothing else is worth preaching?" We preach Christ crucified.

There are three "unto's" that follow which will make up our divisions. Our divisions will be in the form of questions.

Divisions: I. WHAT IS THE PREACHING OF CHRIST CRUCIFIED TO THE JEW?—v23: unto the Jews a stumblingblock, **II. WHAT IS THE PREACHING OF CHRIST CRUCIFIED UNTO THE GREEK?—V23:** and unto the Greeks foolishness; **III. WHAT IS THE PREACHING OF CHRIST CRUCIFIED UNTO THEM WHICH ARE CALLED?--24:** But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.

Proposition: The gospel which declares that Christ is the Wisdom and Power of God to save his people, with no help from those being saved, is despised by all except those who are called.

Our text says, "Unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness." All men who have not been called of God are in one of these two groups, some may be in both, but all are in one or the other.

I. WHAT IS THE PREACHING OF CHRIST CRUCIFIED TO THE JEW?—v23: unto the Jews a stumblingblock,...

Who Are the Jews?

The Jews, in the sense used here, represent all who are religious but attempting to come to God either without Christ or by adding to the work of Christ. They may not be natural descendents of Abraham. They may not even claim to be Jewish. They may claim to be Christians. But all who add to the work of Christ in any way are a Jew as it is used here. The preaching of Christ crucified is a stumbling block to them—they balk at it—get tripped up—they would rather kick it out of the way and keep on their walk.

The Jew is Self-Willed and Self-Taught

The Jew thinks they came to Christ by their wisdom and power. If you do not preach to them that man's will is free—they stumble. Man's will is not free—it is bound to his nature. Natural man cannot change himself unless God creates him anew.

John 3: 1: There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: 2 The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. 3 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. 4 Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? 5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. 6 That which is

born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. 8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit. 9 Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be? 10 Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things? 11: Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness. 12 If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?

John 5: 43: I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive.

John 6:44: No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.

The Jew is Self-Righteous

The Jew is a self-righteous man. He does not believe all men to be depraved—that we fell in the garden. He believes his works to be righteous and to count toward his salvation. He will not deny what I am about to read you with his mouth, but he will by his works—because he stumbles at Christ being all our Righteousness period. He does not believe in his heart this right here:

Romans 5: 19: For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. 20 Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: 21 That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

The Jew is Self-Sanctifying

Next, the Jew stumbles because he does not understand the lawful use of the law which God gave at Mt. Sinai. Again, I remind you he could go by the name of a Christian—but he is no different than a Jew, no different than a Pharisee.

Romans 5: 20:...the law entered, that the offence might abound...

Romans 3: 19: Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. 20: Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

Because the Spirit of God has not given him a new heart, purging his conscious from dead works, to serve the true and living God, he has a zeal for God but not according to knowledge. He really does not believe...

Romans 10:4: For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

The reason they go on trying to establish a righteousness is in the last phrase—to everyone that believes. They do not believe Christ is the end of the law for righteousness. Those who do believe know Christ is the end of the law for righteousness. He will not say he is keeping the law for righteousness sake, only for sanctification—to make him more holy.

Galatians 3: 2: This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? 3: Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?

The Jew is Self-Redeeming

The reason the Jew stumbles is that Christ has not made him free. He has not been made to believe redemption is accomplished by Christ alone. In fact, he is afraid of liberty—of the word freedom. He takes the one of the most glorious doctrines: redemption from the law's yoke and rule, from the law's judgment, from the law's guilt, from the law's curse and condemnation. So he calls it licentious doctrine. He says if you tell a man the truth that "If the Lord shall set you free you shall be free indeed" you are telling a man he is free to live like he wants to. I am telling you the believer lives like he wants too—but those born of the Spirit live wanting to serve Christ, to serve Christ, not to sin; not by force, by faith; not by law, by love--*The just shall live by faith.*

He may very well be a five-point Calvinist in letter, on paper and in the head. When he is with believers he says salvation is by the irresistible grace of God but when he is with his better friends he proudly recounts how he accepted his Jesus and let his God save him. With believers he will declare the flesh profits nothing but with those he is most comfortable with he will proudly tell you how he keeps the law. He can stomach to hear that Christ died for a particular people now and then but it's all the same to hear a message that Christ died for all men. With believers he may not speak much of the signs he seeks and can see like: morality, Sabbath-keeping, tithing, abstinence, humanitarian missions—but with his good friends he will proudly talk about the sin he has stopped sinning and the sinfulness of others. He makes sure all know that he tithes, he prays and ironically, that he is self-abasing. With believers he may say he has no confidence in traditions of men—but he really takes great confidence in the religion of momma/dadda, in a certain denomination and history.

He receives every person who professes to believe God, to believe Christ, with the exception of one: those who declare Christ is All. Even one as pious and tolerant and open-minded as he, can only stomach so long that separatist group, that sect, he labels as hyper-Calvinists. For he says, "They take the finished work of Christ too far! They take the absolute sovereignty of God too far! To hear them talk you would think God is actually God! That Christ actually governs his church all power is his, that Christ is All! That the believer is complete in Christ! That Christ is the fullness of the Godhead bodily and the believer is as complete in Christ as Christ is the fullness of the Godhead bodily!"

Yes, we say the Son of God is the whole message of earth as well as heaven! Yes, we believe Christ is All, we really are determined to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified. And my hearts prayer for any who does not, as Paul said, "is that they might be saved," that God may give you grace to turn from that helpless god of your own hand, to Christ Jesus. So for the sake of his own vain glory, the man who trusts in his own power and wisdom, stumbles at the truth of Christ--*unto the Jew the preaching of Christ crucified is a stumblingblock.*

So when the Jew hears us preach

1 Corinthians 1: 30: But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: 31: That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord—

Christ can't be all or all his works of righteousness are vain and he has no room to glory in self!—that is the real and only issue behind all his smokescreen of lies!

Listen and hear me: Vain, man-exalting, works religion is by far the worst enemy of souls. Preacher did you just say a man is worse off being in a church if that church is not preaching the gospel? That is exactly what I said. The Lord Jesus said that,

Matthew 23:15: Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves.

Matthew 21: 31:...Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you.

Matthew 6: 23: But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great *is* that darkness!

II. WHAT IS THE PREACHING OF CHRIST CRUCIFIED UNTO THE GREEK?—V23: and unto the Greeks foolishness;

Who Are the Greeks?

The Greeks represent all who have their heart set on the world: its wisdom, riches, applause, sports, so on. Again, he may be from Greece. He may be from some other background. He may dabble in religion—for its wisdom's sake, intellectually, of course. But for the most part his mind is set on the world--**To the Greek the preaching of Christ crucified is foolishness.**

Greeks Love Worldly Wisdom

Give him philosophy—he loves it. Give him arts and sciences or history and politics, sports and recreation, even study of religion and philosophy as academics or history or the memorizing of systems of theology—but in his heart of hearts—the **preaching of Christ crucified is foolishness to him.**

The Greek usually considers all religious people as hypocrites—but give him a hypocrite (actor) on the silver-screen, in the theater, or on capital hill and that suits him. Give him a novel or just tell him something new and novel—anything but the scriptures.

He will take the latest song, latest theory, latest joke, latest quip of useless trivia, a few lines of a foreign language, a visit to the museum, a walk in nature. He may be rich or poor, eating goose liver on hundred dollar saltines or potted meat on wonder bread and he will take any worldly thing just do not mention going to the church house unless it is in jest or for hearing some new thing for **unto the Greek the preaching of Christ crucified is foolishness.**

Those are the two categories all unbelievers fit into: they are either self-righteous refusing to bow to the truth that Christ is all or they are brilliant ignoramuses thinking our gospel is foolishness or a mixture. They may be rich and recognized or poor and unnoticed—but these are the two groups all are in.

III. WHAT IS THE PREACHING OF CHRIST CRUCIFIED UNTO THEM WHICH ARE CALLED?--24: But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.

Unto Them Which Are Called

These are the elect of God. They were called of God from eternity in divine election blessed with all spiritual blessings.

Ephesians 1: 3: Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ: 4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: 5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, 6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.

Romans 8: 28: And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose. 29: For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate *to be* conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. 30: Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. 31: What shall we then say to these things? If God *be* for us, who *can be* against us?

These were called effectually of God in time by the preaching of Christ crucified by the Holy Spirit.

1 Corinthians 1: 30: Of God are ye in Christ Jesus who of God is made unto us—ALL!

By the grace of God, by the power and wisdom of God these are born again, created anew, given the mind of Christ, given faith, granted repentance and blessed of God to believe on Christ.

Both Jews and Greeks

Believers come from these two groups. God has made us one in Christ from all kinds of backgrounds.

Revelation 5:9...for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;

The grace of God does in the hearts of his people what the religions and politics of this world only attempt and fake!

Christ the Power and Wisdom of God

Christ crucified is the message which declares the perfection of God's Power and Wisdom. Why did God allow the Jew and the Greek to even come about? It was God's way of making the wisdom of this world to appear to those he calls, as just what it is, utter foolishness.

1 Corinthians 1: 19: For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. 20: Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? 21: For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.

God gave fallen man the heavens and the earth which declare his eternal power and Godhead—and God gave the Jews the very oracles of God—for 4000 years—to figure out who God is and how God will be worshipped. The consummate wisdom of man—the grand conclusion man left to his own wisdom is: man worships man.

Romans 1: 20:..so that they are without excuse: 21 Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. 22: Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, 23: And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. 24: Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: 25: Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.

But in the fullness of time, God sent the One he purposed from eternity

1 Corinthians 1: 21 For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.

God came forth from the womb of a virgin—a babe born in a manger. He called forth those he would use to preach his name. They came forth not dressed in the delicate dress from the ivy halls but in rubber boots from the fishing docks; not with pretty pedicured fingers but with fish scales stuck to their fingers; not speaking over the people's heads with the crafty, intellectualism from the seminary of Gamaliel they came speaking the truth of God in such plain unadorned language that it was impossible for anyone to misunderstand their message. Why did God do such things?

1 Corinthians 1: 25: Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men. 26: For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: 27: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; 28: And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: 29: That no flesh should glory in his presence.

We preach Christ crucified the only Power and Wisdom in this world! The justice of the law satisfied and everlasting mercy given to God's people by the person and finished work of Christ Jesus our Wisdom. More wisdom and power than creation, even the creation of man, is the salvation of sinners in perfect justice by the Wisdom of God accomplished in Christ. Incarnate God upon the cross! The substitute atoning for the guilt of his people! Christ satisfying the justice of heaven! Mercy delivering the rebellious sinner! All so-called wisdom of men must bow into nothingness at this Power and Wisdom of God in Christ.

For those called we have the mind of Christ. True wisdom comes from God in the heart of his people by making us to know Christ our Wisdom. Nature becomes a united creation which glorifies Christ in some way or another.

Isaiah 55: 12: For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.

We glory only in the Lord—that is why we preach Christ crucified. Christ is our Wisdom. Christ is our Righteousness. Christ is our Sanctification. Christ is our Redemption. Christ is our Acceptance and Completion. Christ is our Glorification and our Glory. Christ is our Inheritance and our Reward. CHRIST IS ALL AND IN ALL!

Amen!