

Series: 1 Corinthians
Title: Our Determinate Message
Text: 1 Cor 2: 1-2
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This is the most important message I have ever preached.

Paul declared the utter uselessness of man's oratory, of preaching man's philosophy and man's works. Paul declared the power and wisdom is in preaching Christ and him crucified. Then he said this...

1 Corinthians 2: 1: And I

Accordingly I—in accordance with this revealed purpose of God to reject the wisdom of men and instead preach the cross—accordingly....

1 Corinthians 2: 1:...I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God.

“The testimony of God” is the gospel, the witness of God concerning his Son, Jesus Christ. Christ said, “The Father himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me.” (Jn 5: 37)

Imagine the pride of a sinner thinking his words are better than preaching God's word. The Psalmist said, “The law [the word] of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple.” (Ps 19: 7)

It is through the preaching of the gospel of Christ and him crucified that God quickens his child and makes us keep the witness of Christ, giving us a determination to know nothing but Christ and him crucified. The Psalmist said, “Quicken me after thy lovingkindness; so shall I keep the testimony of thy mouth.” (Ps 119: 88) God-gives this determination by saving his preacher and people through the preaching of Christ and him crucified. We see it in the apostle Paul.

1 Corinthians 2: 2: For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.

Our subject is “Our Determinate Message.” Christ and him crucified is the one message God's preachers and God's people are determined to preach and hear because Christ and him crucified is all the counsel of God.

It was the preaching of Christ and him crucified that Paul referred to when he told the Ephesians, “I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.” (Acts 20: 27)

When we know Christ and him crucified, we know all the counsel of God. Christ Jesus the Lord and Christ's redemptive work—Christ's death, Christ's resurrection, Christ's reign right now, Christ delivering up the kingdom to God—is all the council of God.

A COMMON MISTAKE

First, let me address a common mistake among men. Lost sinners approach the word of God seeking something they can do to save themselves. Christ said this is their problem. He said, “Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.” (Jn 5: 39-40)

Christ and his work of salvation for his people is the subject of all the scriptures. When Christ revealed himself on the Emmaus road, he revealed that all the scriptures speak of Christ and him crucified.

Luke 24: 27: And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself...44: And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, [by Christ] which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me.

So Christ is the Key of knowledge—the key to salvation, the key to understanding the scriptures—the Key of knowledge. To those who preach works for salvation, Christ said, “Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered.” (Lu 11: 52)

Christ is all the counsel of God. Those Christ has saved go to the scriptures seeking Christ and him crucified. Christ is the only subject we preach and desire to hear preached. We are comforted and constrained to faith and good works by Christ’s love for us.

ALL THE COUNSEL OF GOD

Secondly, I want to show you that Christ is all the counsel of God.

COUNSEL CONCERNING GOD’S ETERNAL PURPOSE

First, it is only by preaching Christ crucified that God makes his child understand the eternal counsel and purpose of God.

Isaiah said under the power of God the Holy Spirit, God “Declares the end from the beginning,...saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure:” (Is 46: 10) In Hebrews we read, “the works were finished from the foundation of the world.” (Heb 4: 3)

How can that be? It is because God chose Christ, God trusted him to glorify God and save God’s chosen people and Christ cannot fail.

Ephesians 1: 11: In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will. 12: That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.

The works were finished from the foundation of the world because God trusted Christ and gave all the work of glorifying God and saving his people into Christ’s hands. John wrote that. He said, “Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands...” (Jn 13: 3)

God’s eternal counsel, God’s electing grace, God’s predestinating grace is doctrine that the natural man hates. He hates it because it takes all the glory out of man’s hands and declares the glory goes to God alone and his Son Christ Jesus.

Believers love the doctrine of election because it glorifies Christ. God first chose Christ. God elected a people in Christ to glorify Christ in the salvation of his people. And because Christ shall not fail it meant that the salvation of God’s people was settled before God created the first grain of sand. God said of Christ, “Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him:

he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles...he shall not fail till he hath set judgment in the earth.” (Is 42: 1, 4)

Likewise, believers love the doctrine of predestination because it, too, glorifies Christ. God predestinated his people to be conformed to the image of his Son to give his Son all the glory as the Firstborn, “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.” (Rom 8: 29)

We do not preach God’s eternal counsel and election and predestination to simply persuade men to believe a doctrine. We preach God’s eternal purpose, God’s election, God’s predestination by preaching Christ’s glory as all God’s council and purpose. We preach Christ as God’s elect in whom God chose his people. And we preach Christ whom God predestinated his elect to be conformed unto.

Therefore, we delight in God’s eternal purpose when God makes us see Christ’s glory in it. He does so through the preaching of Christ and him crucified. That is why we are determined to preaching nothing but Christ and him crucified.

COUNSEL CONCERNING THE FALL

Secondly, the reason we preach Christ crucified is because Christ is God’s counsel by whom we understand what took place in the garden and in the fall.

Scripture says Adam was a type of Christ, “[Adam] is the figure of him that was to come.” (Rom 5: 14) Christ is called “the last Adam”, “And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.” (1 Cor 15: 45) How is Adam a picture of Christ, the last Adam? How do we understand Adam and the fall by looking at Christ and him crucified?

Adam was holy and righteous in himself. It typified Christ who is the only other Man holy and righteous of himself.

Adam was given dominion over all God’s creation. It pictured Christ to whom God has given all power in heaven and in earth.

Adam represented all who would be born of him. It typifies Christ who represents all who shall be born of him. There are only two men—two federal heads and representatives—the first Adam and the last Adam. Every man will be found under one of these two. We will be condemned by Adam’s disobedience if we face God in unbelief or we will be saved by Christ’s obedience if we believe on Christ and rest in him. Scripture says, “For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.” (Rom 5: 19)

Adam, for the sake of his bride, in disobedience to God, plunged himself into sin. It pictures Christ, who in obedience to God, for the sake of his bride, plunged himself into sin in her place.

So by Christ and him crucified, we know why sin entered into the world in the first place! It was according to the purpose of God. Why? It was that God might glorify himself in his Son in the salvation of his chosen people. This is the truth that no sinner will believe unless God quickens us to behold Christ and him crucified. And God performs this operation of grace only through the gospel of Christ and him crucified. This is why we preach only Christ and him crucified!

COUNSEL CONCERNING THE GLORY OF GOD

Thirdly, preaching Christ and him crucified, we declare the glory of God.

Most think God's chief glory is love. But according to the glory he showed Moses, God's glory is his grace and justice.

Exodus 33: 19: And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy...

Exodus 34: 6: And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, 7: Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; (Ex 34:6-7)

God is gracious to whom he will be gracious but only by God's law being honored and upheld. All have sinned. Therefore, justice must be poured out on every sinner, even those God saves. But how can we die to justice and be saved in mercy? Only by Christ taking the place of God's elect on the cross.

That is why God put Moses in the cleft of the Rock. In Christ is where we see God's glory. "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." (2 Cor 4: 6)

Christ declares the grace and righteousness of God. In Christ God is both Just and the Justifier of those who believe on Christ. In Christ, God both slayed his people under the law and made his people perfectly righteous and forever free from the law.

Romans 3: 25: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins...26: To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. 27: Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith. 28: Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.

Psalms 85: 8: I will hear what God the LORD will speak: for he will speak peace unto his people, and to his saints: but let them not turn again to folly. 9: Surely his salvation is nigh them that fear him; that glory may dwell in our land. 10: Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.

COUNSEL CONCERNING ALL THE SCRIPTURES

Fourthly, all scripture is God bearing testimony of his Righteousness—Christ Jesus the Son of God.

Romans 3: 21: But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; 22: Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ..."

The single message of all the scriptures is the faith of Christ Jesus in whom the righteousness of God is manifested. The only way sinners understand the scriptures is by divine revelation in the Light of Christ. Christ is the Key of knowledge. It is he whom all the law and the prophets bear witness.

Concerning "the law"—the first five books of the Bible written by Moses—Christ said, "Moses wrote of me." (Jn 5: 46) Christ is the promised Seed of woman in the garden. He is the innocent lambs slain by which God covered Adam and Eve's nakedness. Christ is typified in Abel's Lamb and Noah's Ark. It is the glory

of Christ declared in the birthright and the firstborn. Joseph is a preeminent type of Christ. The passover lamb, the high priest, the altar, the mercy seat, the scape goat, the lamb, the furniture, the curtains, even the tabernacle itself, all typified Christ.

Hebrews 9: 9: Which was a figure for the time then present,...11: But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; 12: Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.

The same is true of all prophecy. Prophecy is not for us to speculate about how the world will end or when it will end. Prophecy declares the righteousness of God, Christ and him crucified! Christ said, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil." (Mt 5: 17) Prophecy is the foretelling of everything Christ would fulfill. Read the prophets looking for Christ and him crucified.

Likewise the Psalms are Christ speaking. Some of the Psalms apply to David but mostly it is Christ speaking. In Psalm 1, Christ is the Blessed Man the same as Psalm 22 is Christ on the cross, the same as the end of Psalm 22 is Christ saving his people through the gospel from his throne in glory, the same as Psalm 23 is Christ our Shepherd.

Concerning the law, the prophets and the psalms listen to Christ's declaration,

Luke 24: 44:...All things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. 45: Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, 46: And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: 47: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

It behoved Christ to lay down his life on the cross, to rise again, and to send forth the gospel to be preached because the entire old testament declares this is how Christ would bring all glory to God while saving his people from our sins. Read Hebrews, you will find out. It teaches us that when we read the old testament law we should do so seeking Christ and him crucified.

COUNSEL OF THE RESURRECTED CHRIST

So preaching Christ crucified we preach Christ resurrected, reigning from his throne in glory. God raised Christ because Christ accomplished the work of redeeming his people from our sins. Now God has given Christ the glory of sending his preacher to his people. Through the Holy Spirit, through his preacher, Christ preaches the word to those he saves. Christ sends the Spirit making the word effectual in our hearts. He makes his child do as he will, "it is God working in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." (Php 2: 13) Christ preserves his child. He shall resurrect all his redeemed. Christ shall glorify his people and present us all to the Father. It means "salvation is of the Lord." That is what we preach when we preach Christ and him crucified.

COUNSEL CONCERNING GOOD WORKS

What about good works? No work is good until "of [God] are ye in Christ, who of God is made unto us Wisdom, and Righteousness and Sanctification and Redemption" So that we do not glory in our flesh but only in the Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Cor 1: 29-31)

The essential work of God is declared by Christ, "Jesus said...This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." (Jn 6: 29) Until a sinner is brought to repent from our works and rest in Christ, we can do nothing God will accept. Only in Christ are we accepted of God.

Galatians 3: 11: But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith. 12: And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them. 13: Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:

It is impossible to be accepted of God partly by the works of the law and partly by God's grace in Christ. Believers, born of Christ, given faith in Christ, are not under the rule of law, we are under the rule of Christ.

Galatians 3: 23: But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. 24: Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster...[until] Christ, that we might be justified by faith. 25: But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. 26: For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

Believers are taught of God to forgive, not by looking to the letter of the law, but by looking to Christ, "And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." (Eph 4: 32) We are taught to be followers of God and walk in love, not by looking to the letter of the law, but by looking to Christ, "Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour." (Eph 5:1-2) Believers are taught to give, not by looking to a 10% tax in the old covenant law, but by looking to Christ, "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich." (2 Cor 8: 9) The letter of the law does not teach us humility, only Christ, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." (Php 2:5-8)

This is why the Holy Spirit moved Paul to ask the Galatian believers why they desired to go back to the law now that they knew Christ and were known of Christ, "But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?" (Gal 4: 9) Paul said, "Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law?" (Gal 4: 21)

The preachers who preach works make their congregants very zealous. But it is not good zeal, "They zealously affect you, but not well; yea, they would exclude you, that ye might affect them." (Gal 4: 17)

Galatians 5: 1: Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. 2: Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. 3: For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. 4: Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace. 5: For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. 6: For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.

Believers need no law to make us obey Christ, we only need Christ himself and his great love for us seen at the cross. "Faith which works by love" is the only holy heart motive God will accept for Christ's sake. That is why we must hear Christ and him crucified only. The problem's that existed at Corinth is because false preachers came in preaching other things.

Isn't it amazing how preachers are trying so hard to constrain sinners to obedience by preaching works. But the only message that will constrain a believer to good works is the preaching of Christ and him crucified.

The believer who shall be saved and shall grow in grace will do so by Christ and him crucified, in the knowledge of Jesus Christ. May God make us determined to know nothing but Christ and him crucified. May God makes us turn off the tv and put on a sermon, close the worldly books and open the Bible. The more we know Christ the more we will want to; and the less we know him, the less we will want too.

This is the only knowledge that never fails; riches, shall fail; worldly honors shall cease; but the knowledge of Jesus Christ, and him crucified, abideth for ever. There is no doctrine more excellent, more necessary to be preached and heard than the doctrine of Jesus Christ and him crucified. Everything else is dross.

Philippians 3:8: Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ,

Colossians 2: 3: In him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

Amen!