

# I determined to know nothing but Jesus Christ and Him Crucified

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- [ 0 : 00 ] Let us resume our public worship of God by singing to his praise from Psalm 49.
- Psalm 49 and we're singing from the beginning. Hear this all people and give ear, all in the world that dwell, both low and high, both rich and poor.
- My mouth shall whistle terror, my heart shall knowledge meditate. I will incline mine ear to parables, on the harp my sayings dark declare.
- Amidst those days that evil be, why should I fearing doubt, when off my heels the iniquity shall compass me about? Where they be their inner wealth, their confidence do pitch and boost themselves, because they are become exceeding rich.
- Yet none of these his brother can redeem by any way, nor can he unto God for him sufficient ransom pay. Their soul's redemption precious is, and it can never be, that still he should forever live, and not corruption see.
- [ 1 : 21 ] And so on, we can sing these verses 1 to 9 of Psalm 49. Hear this all people and give ear, all in the world that dwell. Hear this all people and give ear, all in the world that dwell.
- Hear this all people and give ear, all in the world that dwells in the world that dwells in the world that dwells in the world.
- Hear this all people and give ear, all in the world that dwells in the world that dwells in the world that dwells in the world.
- Why should I fear in doubt, when off my heels the iniquity shall compass me about?
- Who e'er they be that in their wealth, their confidence do pitch.
- [ 3 : 27 ] And boast themselves because they are become exceeding rich.
- Yet none of these his brother can redeem by any way.
- Nor can he unto God for him sufficient ransom pay.
- Their soul's redemption precious is, and it can never be, That still he should forever live, and not corruption see.
- Let us join together in prayer. Let us pray. O Lord, O Lord, O Lord of God, as we come into your presence with your words upon our lips, I grant to us that you would mercifully undertake for us, For we are but the dust of the dust of the dust we have.
- [ 5 : 20 ] From the dust unto the dust we will return. The fragility that we are but the dust of the dust we have. The fragility that marks us out in our earthly sojourn is something that is brought home to us day after day.
- And yet the fool that sits upon the throne of our heart reminds us that our created condition was one that we were meant to live on in this world.
- And the delusion that belongs to such thoughts are ever with us. Because your word teaches us otherwise, and life's experience says otherwise.
- That the day that man fell from the estate wherein he was created was by reason of sin.

And sin was something that you ordained would produce death. And that death is seen not only in the fact that we have, by habit and repute, committed sin.

[ 6 : 45 ] Sinned against you, O God, in thought, in word and inner deeds. But that you have condemned us to separation from you for time and for eternity.

Were it not the case that by reason of your grace that we are given access to you through Christ the Lord.

If we do not have that access, we remain as we were when our first parents fell. We fell with sin in him and fell with him.

And we acknowledge that is how it will remain. But if not for the gospel of your grace laying hold upon us.

And drawing us to put our trust in Christ Jesus as Lord. We pray your blessing upon the word that is preached and proclaimed not only in this place this evening.

[ 7 : 52 ] But in any other place where your people gather. And with them others who are yet to be numbered amongst them. We pray that that word would be declared without ambiguity, with clarity, with forthrightness.

And most especially with power from on high. Without that power we know that that word will not accomplish anything other than to bring condemnation.

At that last day when all must answer to God who gave that word for the good of our soul. So we pray for power to come.

Accompany the preached word. We are jealous of your glory. But often times we forget that wherever the elect of God are brought in.

It is that which will glorify your name. Our selfish desire would have it be so in our own homes, in our families, in our communities.

[ 9 : 10 ] Our great fear is that there are times when it seems to our understanding that you have approved it and gone away from us.

You have moved your candlestick from our midst. And we must acknowledge and we do that it is no wonder.

For we deserve not the least of your mercies. We pray that you would remember us. And we do pray earnestly and honestly that we can do nothing without you.

Even in the proclamation of your word. Wherever apparent it may seem outwardly that the word conforms to what it should be.

And that there is nothing lacking outwardly. We know that your word so often condemns the hypocrite. And so often condemns the lives of those who are but whited sepulchre.

[ 10 : 28 ] And who are a mess of putrefaction within. So we see ourselves at times and we acknowledge that.

And we pray forgiveness for every shortcoming that marshaled witness here in this world. We pray for the testimony of your people to be consistent with the life that they lead.

That what their mouth says, that their walk would also say it. We pray for all who are recipients of your grace.

That they may be willing partakers of it in order to share richly with others. Of what they have received from your hand.

That your heart is not allowed to be. You have bestowed so many good things upon us. And they are not meant to be spent or misspent.

[ 11 : 32 ] Upon our own egos and upon all. That we would have ourselves to be without understanding. that what we are in the eyes of God is the all-important thing that matters and that whatever you have given to us that you have given us these things so that we can glorify your name even by drawing others into the confines of the family of the Most High.

Remember the proclamation of truth into the far corners of the earth. We give thanks for the testimony that we heard today for a reminder of the many that are in this world who are witnesses to the truth in places where to bear such witness brings certain death.

We think of families that have been persecuted for many who have lost breadwinners by reason of their own witness to the truth.

We pray that you would remember all such and minister to them in the way that only you can. Remember the various nations that are openly hostile to the gospel that worship gods that are no gods and that bring the truth to be submerged under all the error and inequity that their beliefs present.

We pray, Lord, for your blessing upon the church that is in the world. Some of it is hidden from sight and yet the reality is that the day will come when what we see as the church of Christ will be exposed for what it is and that those who love the Lord in sincerity will be declared by that same Lord as those who are truly the treasures of his kingdom.

[ 14 : 04 ] We pray, Lord, that you would remember those who are this evening suffering from the various challenges that being alive in this world brings.

We know that there are some who are unwell. We pray for them. We pray for those who are confined to their homes being cared for by others. Some in hospitals, some in care homes, some who are terminally ill in the hospice.

We remember all such, especially amongst them, your own people. Remember the grieving and the sorrowful as your voice once again resonates within our communities, reminding us of the fragility of our humanity.

We pray that you would sanctify such visitations to us all and especially that you would heal the hurt of those that you have drawn near to.

We pray that you would sanctify every dealing in providence to us that we may confess our sins, that we may repent of these sins and that we may flee with all diligence to Christ, the alone saviour of sinners.

[ 15 : 27 ] So bless us as a people, as a nation. Remember those who govern us. Remember our King and his family. Nations of the earth that are experiencing war and the challenges that arise out of it.

Those who are suffering poverty, those who are suffering because of disease and all the accompanying griefs that come with that.

Be merciful to us as our generation. Cleanse from every sin. In Jesus' name we would ask it. For forgiveness of sin in him. Amen. You can sing again to God's praise this time, singing verses from Psalm 62.

Psalm 62, at verse 5, down to verse 10. Psalm 63, Psalm 63, my soul, with patience upon thy God alone, on him dependeth all my hope and expectation.

He only my salvation is, and my strong rock is he. He only is my sure defence, I shall not move it be. In God my glory placed is, and my salvation sure.

[ 16 : 48 ] In God the rock is of my strength, my refuge most secure. Ye people, place your confidence in him continually. Before him pour ye out your heart.

God is a refuge high. Truly mean men are vanity, and great men are alive. In balance laid, they holy are more light than vanity.

Trust ye not in oppression, in robbery be not vain, on wealth set not your hearts, when as increase is your gain. 5 to 10 of Psalm 62, my soul, wait thou with patience upon thy God alone.

My soul, wait thou with patience upon thy God alone.

On him dependeth all my hope, and expectation.

[ 18 : 08 ] He only my salvation is, and my strong rock is he.

He only is my sure defence, I shall not move it be.

In God my glory placed is, and my salvation sure.

In God the rock is all my strength, my refuge most secure.

He people, He people, bless your confidence, and help continually.

[ 19 : 37 ] ech people, be Shawty love money.

Thank you. Thank you. If you try, surely mid-land are vanity, and great men are alike.

And balance with the holy hour, more light than vanity.

Trust ye in your terrible passion, in robbery be not made.

Or well send not your heart, when as increased, is your gain.

[ 21 : 16 ] We are going to hear God's word as we have it in the New Testament Scriptures. The first epistle of Paul to the Corinthians, chapter 1.

And we can begin to read at verse 18, reading into chapter 2. 1 Corinthians, chapter 1, taking up the reading at verse 18.

For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness. But unto us which are saved it is the power of God. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.

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?

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.

[ 22 : 38 ] For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom. But we preach Christ crucified. Unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness.

But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men.

And the weakness of God is stronger than men. For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called.

But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confirm the wise. And God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confirm the things which are mighty.

And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen. Yea, and things which are not, to bring to naught things that are, that no flesh should glory in his presence.

[ 23 : 50 ] But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption, that according, as it is written, he that glorieth threaten glory in the Lord.

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

For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling.

And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

How be it we speak wisdom among them that are perfect, yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world that come to naught.

[ 25 : 00 ] But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory, which none of the princes of this world knew.

For had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written, I hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things, which God hath prepared for them that love him.

But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit. For the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the Spirit of man which is in him?

Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received not the Spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.

Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

[ 26 : 20 ] But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him. Neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

But he that is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him?

But we have the mind of Christ. Amen. And may the Lord have his blessing to this reading of his word, and to this name be the praise.

Let us continue to sing to God's praise, verses from Psalm 119. Psalm 119, on the fifth section of this psalm, verse 33 to 40.

Teach me, O Lord, the perfect way of thy precepts divine, and to observe it to the end I shall my heart incline. Give understanding unto me, so keep thy law shall I.

[ 27 : 33 ] Yea, even with my whole heart I shall observe it carefully. In thy law's path make me to go, for I delight therein. My heart unto thy testimonies, and not to greed incline.

Turn thou away my sight and eyes from viewing vanity, and in thy good and holy way be pleased to quicken me. Confirm to me thy gracious word, which I did gladly hear, even to thy servant, Lord, who is devoted to thy fear.

Turn thou away my feared reproach, for good thy judgments be. Lo, for thy precepts I have longed. In thy truth quicken me.

We can sing this section of Psalm 119 to God's praise. Teach me, O Lord, the perfect way of thy precepts divine.

Teach me, O Lord, the perfect way O Lord, the perfect way of thy presence divine.

[ 28 : 47 ] And to observe it to the end, I shall my heart incline.

Give understanding unto me, So keep thy law shall lie.

Yea, even with my whole heart I shall observe it carefully.

In thy loss hath made me to go, For I delight the end.

My heart unto lightest monies, And not to grist incline.

[ 30 : 14 ] Turn thou away my sight and eyes, From viewing vanity.

And in thy good and holy way, Be pleased to quicken me.

Confirm to me Thy gracious word, Which I did gladly hear.

Into thy servant, Lord, Who is devoted to thy fear.

Turn thou away my feared reproach, For good thy judgments be.

[ 31 : 40 ] Lo, for thy precepts I have longed, In thy truth quicken me.

I would like us to turn to 1 Corinthians, And chapter 2. And we can read at the beginning of the chapter.

1 Corinthians chapter 2. And I, And I, brethren, And I, brethren, When I came to you, Came not with excellency of speech, Or of wisdom, Declaring unto you the testimony of God.

For I determined not to know anything among you, Save Jesus Christ and him crucified. For I determined not to know anything among you, Save Jesus Christ and him crucified.

From time to time there are young people, Sometimes not so young, Who are interested in finding out what it is that they need to do in order to fulfill a calling that they are aware of, That is placed on their life.

[ 33 : 27 ] They feel called to preach the gospel. And they want clarity on that. They want to find out what that involves. And I don't think you could ask them to do anything better than read the first few chapters in this epistle.

For when you read carefully through what the apostle has to say, Without laboring the point he mentions, I don't think he's deliberately focusing on what was true of himself, In the sense of describing to us what it means for a person to be called by God to labor in the vineyard of God, As a preacher of the gospel.

But almost without realizing it, He brings to our attention some of the things that are true of himself.

He begins the epistle by speaking of himself as an apostle. And an apostle is nothing if he is not someone who is sent by Christ.

And that's what Paul believes himself to be. Someone sent by Christ. In verse 17, he tells us there, Christ has sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel.

[ 35 : 03 ] And in verse 23, he says, We preach the gospel. So, in these two verses, three verses, You find Paul describing to us what is true of himself.

He is sent by Christ to preach the gospel. He elaborates on that later on. As he goes on in this epistle, He describes himself as somebody who declares the testimony of God.

That is his purpose. I, brethren, when I came to you, Came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, Declaring unto you the testimony of God.

It might seem obvious, but that is what he believes himself called to do. Speak to others concerning the truth of God.

The truth as it applies to God. The truth as God has made it known. He also says, We speak wisdom.

[ 36 : 16 ] The wisdom of God. Again, his speech. That is the focus of his speaking. He is speaking the truth of God to those who would hear what he has to say.

And then, he tells us in chapter 2, He describes to us his role as a pastor, A preacher who is a pastor. I have fed you, he says, with milk and not strong meat.

Not strong meat. That is his calling as well. He wants to bring God's people nourishment for their soul. To nurture them. And to satisfy the longings of their soul with a word in season as God has given it to him.

Then, he says, I have planted. I have planted. His terminology is very broad, but it requires us to understand that his calling as a preacher involves him in several different facets of the experience.

I have planted, he says. And then, he says later on, I have laid the foundation. Different pictures, different analogies, different ways of expressing how he has fulfilled his calling to be an apostle of God.

[ 37 : 45 ] And so on. And so on. But, essentially, what Paul feels himself to be is somebody whose role is to preach Christ to others.

And, in a sense, if you take in the whole of the context in which the passage, the words in the first sermon this evening are concerned, you have to remind yourself of the fact that there was a challenge to the preaching of Paul in that locality.

There was a challenge in the understanding that confronted him in his desire to speak of Christ to others. Because, when Paul spoke of Christ to others, he was doing something that the vast majority of those who were on the stage, as it were, those who were presenting themselves as vessels for the truth, or whatever truth they wanted to communicate, they usually attracted attention to themselves.

Whereas, Paul's calling was not to speak of himself, but to speak of someone else. His ministry is not to project himself, but rather to promote Christ.

And many in Corinth were in the business, as you will understand, of self-promotion. But that was not the apostles' calling.

[ 39 : 35 ] Many today, did I say, in our own generation are no different. And the reason it's not complicated.

It's probably what we are by nature. And if we live in a society that is favouring that kind of self-promotion, and I've said it often to you, Our children are taught that from a very early age, that the self-presentation is all important.

Self-promotion is something that they are encouraged to do. Whatever you do, don't be reticent. Don't be backward in coming forward. Speak what you think.

Don't be embarrassed about it, even if you're wrong. And that is very often what our young people are being taught.

And having imbibed that thought with their mothers, much as it were, it's very difficult to get away from it. And the thing about that is that it flies in the face of what the apostle is emphasising.

[ 40 : 52 ] That what is important is not what we are, but what he is to us. And if he is important to us, we, in turn, will understand the place of import we have in the eyes of God.

But people are impatient of that kind of thinking. And it's not, it's not at all a strange occurrence for you to come across somebody saying to you, what has the church got for me?

What relevance has the church got for this contemporary society? What has the Christian got for this contemporary society?

What of you who believe in God that is worth listening to, that I want to hear? I want to hear. And essentially this is one of the challenges that the apostle had to face when he was dealing with the people in Corinth.

Well, we want to look at this verse in particular, and I think at the heart of what he says here, Paul's answer to some of the pointed questions that might have been directed to him is, Jesus Christ is central to my experience.

[ 42 : 35 ] Jesus Christ and him crucified is what I believe in. It wasn't always the case, but it is now. And I am able to tell you how that is so and why that is so and why it should be so for you.

And that is why in his preaching, whatever direction his preaching took him, as he took God's word and sought to bring that word to the attention of others, it always took him to Christ.

And not only did it take him to Christ, but he wanted those who were hearing him preach to come with him to Christ.

And that's important. There's no point in me preaching to you if I'm not going to take you to Christ. And there's no point in me taking you to Christ by way of the word without wanting to take you on this road so that you would want to be with Christ in whatever way the word has brought him to your attention.

So we want, just for a brief time this evening, to mark what makes Paul stand out in his own day and what makes all who are like Paul stand out in our day.

[ 44 : 11 ] And then we can consider the message that he feels burdened to present, the subject matter that is all important to him.

And then finally, what is at the heart of the message that is preached and the reason for it.

The subject matter is important, but it's not just a discourse. It's not just a... You might find somebody, for example, in a place of learning, and they'll introduce a subject to you.

And all they're interested in is exploring every avenue that you can possibly follow as far as that subject is concerned.

But there's a reason for the exploration is what Paul is doing. What he is saying about Christ is all important to the person who hears and preached the message of the gospel.

[ 45 : 30 ] Because they need to understand what that means for the person who hears the word and who believes the word and who acts upon what that word brings to their attention.

Now we know from Paul's various writings that he is somebody who was skilful in presenting arguments such as the arguments that need to accompany the preaching of the gospel.

So, you know, he was a great apologist for the truth. You understand the word apologist is not our use of it.

We use the word apology as if we're sorry for something that we've said. An apologist in Paul's day, an apologist even in our day, is somebody who elaborates on the truth, who explains it, who brings the truth to be bare in the most positive and most meaningful way.

And Paul had every opportunity to do that. He had every preparation to do that to the best of his ability.

[ 47 : 01 ] Prior to him being a Christian, he was a man of learning in the Jewish faith. Somebody who was trained to teach others.

So in that training, he had to understand the position that others would take in the faith and outside of the faith.

And by the faith, I mean the faith that the Jews believed in. But also those opposed to that faith. Paul had the ability to confront them and to argue his own color, as it were.

So he wasn't lacking in that. But it would appear from what we read in this passage that he is dismissing of it.

He is making little of rhetoric, for example, which is the language designed to impress the hearer. And there were men, well, mostly men in those days, who had this ability to make their case and to impress those who were hearing what they had to say with the way they presented it.

[ 48 : 15 ] Or others who were philosophers and who had a grasp of the various trends in philosophical reasoning of that day.



Now, Paul was not saying that these things were of no use. That's not what his argument was. But his argument was that these things, in and of themselves, are not the things that matter as far as his faith is concerned.

His purpose in speaking, whether it was using the powers of reason or the powers of rhetoric or the powers of the philosopher's mindset, it was always not to attract attention to his skills as a spokesman or as a speaker or as a narrator, but for his speech to direct others to somebody else.

And that somebody else was Christ. I, brethren, he says, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God.

My speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the spirit and of power. Now, you would think that he lacked all of these things.

[ 49 : 55 ] That's not the point that he is making. What he had to say did not depend upon these skills. What he wanted to say and what he did say and the truth that he presented concerning Christ was not dependent upon his power to reason with others, to present an argument that would be conclusive or that would be winsome in its ways.

He looked beyond that to a greater and a higher power. And the thing that Paul understood and knew for himself was that it was possible, even using these powers which he knew he possessed, that it was possible to obscure Christ from view.

People would be taken up with the language, taken up with the words that were expressed and lose sight of the meaning of these words and the direction of which these words were meant to convey us.

Paul is not intent on a false humility arising out of his certainty of his ability.

He had that. But rather he is determined not to lose sight of what he is doing. What should impress the hearer is what Paul is saying in the sense that what he is saying, he is saying it about somebody other than himself.

[ 51 : 44 ] His topic is all important. The person about whom he is speaking is all important. I remember somebody once telling me he was speaking about a well-known preacher in the church and, well, needless to say, this person was not, he didn't consider this preacher in favourable terms.

But what he said was, he's a wordsmith. I often wondered about his ministry, but what he said was, he's a wordsmith.

In other words, he has a gift with language, which he is not ashamed to use. And people are taken up on the shoulders of his ability to use that language.

Now, I'm not saying that that person was right. But what I am saying, that it is quite possible for us to lose ourselves in a person's ability to project something other than what they should be projecting.

And what they should be projecting, what Paul was desirous of presenting to the mind's eye, was the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

[ 53 : 15 ] The person of whom he speaks here, I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified.

I'm not just saying that, you know, it was exclusively what was true of him with regard to his ability to preach.

But if that is true, and it was true of Paul, it encapsulated his preaching as well. Because when he spoke to a congregation, he wanted to speak to them about Christ.

He wanted what he said to them about Christ to be what captivated their mind, the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. And Paul knew enough about himself not to rely on himself or anything that he was, but rather, as he emphasizes here in the context and beyond, emphasized the need that there is for what, he says, to be visited with power from on high and accompanied with power.

No power Paul possessed would enable his message to go home with the same effect were it not accompanied with this power of the Holy Spirit which he longed for and which he desired to see.

[ 54 : 50 ] And that is true about any preacher of the gospel, I would hope. Supposing I was very gifted in the use of language and I was able to carry you with me in what I had to say.

Well, so what? At the end of the day, if that's all you have for listening to my words, my sermon, if God in his infinite wisdom does not see fit to bless with the power of the Holy Spirit that word so that you embrace it as his truth, that you lose sight of the channel but rather the truth that is conveyed to you by way of the channel which is what Paul desires.

The preacher and teacher, Charles Hodge, said the following about Paul. He had a work to do which he felt to be entirely above his power.

He was anxious because of a sense of insufficiency. And the infinite input of his work. Now you might not think that would be true of the Apostle Paul.

That he was aware of his own inability. Such a powerful instrument in the hands of God.

[ 56 : 26 ] And yet, probably the most potent of God's servants have always been convinced of their own weakness.

Their own inability as far as producing in men and women, young and old, what they would have produced in them because they cannot do it.

God alone can. The fact of the matter is Paul is not alone in this. And yet, the fact of the matter is his role is to do all these things that he feels called to do.

All these things that we mentioned at the very outset. Somebody who feels himself and he is sent by Christ.

His instinct is to say, here am I sent somebody else. To preach Christ, let somebody else do it.

[ 57 : 34 ] I am a poor, lisping infant when it comes to what I have to declare that concerns Christ. I don't know how to do it.

I cannot do it. They are so aware of their own inability. Paul was no different. But this is what he was called to do.

He is not there on his own account. But as an ambassador for Christ. He is there called by God to announce what God has given him to speak of.

One annoying political statement I often hear from various parties who say they have a mandate to govern.

And they base that upon the fact that a majority of the electorate have placed them in power. But the unfortunate thing about that claim is that while they may have that mandate as far as the majority is concerned, they pick and choose what they want to govern with.

[ 58 : 58 ] They can pick this and leave that. Paul has a mandate from God to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. Nothing else.

That's his calling. Jesus Christ and him crucified. That is what men and women need to hear. And that is what he is exclusively given over to in his proclamation of the truth, in his obedience to being sent by God in order to deliver the message in all the other areas that he feels himself inarticulate, inefficient, a clay vessel carrying the most precious of God's gifts.

And yet he cannot get away from his calling. A commission entrusted to him by God. And what is it? What is the subject?

Well, the subject matters. You will not hear anything better than this from any pulpit in the land, whoever the preacher is, because the preacher has to declare this if they are sent by God, if they are ambassadors for God, if they're God is God alone, they are sent to speak the truth concerning Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ is at the centre of God's revelation, given by God, and he himself, a revelation of God.

[ 60 : 41 ] You know, do you hear what John says, the brightness of God's glory, and the express image of God's passion. That's who Christ is.

Whether the people liked what Paul had to say or not, it didn't matter. This was the message that God entrusted to him. He didn't set out to offend, he didn't set out to bring people into conflict with himself.

That was not his role, that was not his calling. His calling was to speak the truth of God, however men and women took to it. F.F.

Bruce, one of the commentators, says the following about Paul when he preached in Athens in particular. He says, his speech begins with God, the creator of all, and continues with God, the sustainer of all, and concludes with God, the judge of all.

And he says, all three concepts were offensive to the Greek mind. And yet, in his preaching, he couldn't get away from this. This is what God gave to him to preach.

[ 62 : 02 ] And the preacher must, Paul must, whoever the preacher is, must, he brings Christ, Jesus, and him crucified to the attention of men and women, young and older alike.

Jesus Christ is the passion. Him crucified is the work of that passion, the sum and substance of the gospel, according to numerous theologians.

as a preacher, Paul weaves and interweaves many themes into his preaching, but not one of them separate from the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

He speaks of the incarnation. He speaks of the man who is God and the God who is man. He speaks of all the different roles that the Lord Jesus Christ fulfills.

He is the prophet, he is the priest, he is the king. Paul describes him in these offices. He describes him in the fulfillment of his ministry as the one who reconciles us to God, who redeems the sinner, who in the various ways in which he is represented to us in the gospel is all these things that he must be as Jesus Christ crucified.

[ 63 : 40 ] Subject martyr that is given by Paul to preach is inexhaustible. It's amazing how often the apostle preached and I don't suppose that at the end of his preaching ministry that he sat down satisfied, smugly satisfied and said I've said it all, I've fulfilled my calling, I've done more than was asked.

Christ, I'm sure at the end of his days he would say oh there's more, there's more, if only I had more time to tell you about this Christ, to tell you about what it means for him to have died on the cross.

The power of God unto salvation, one of the commentators says this, crucified is a perfect participle, once crucified he continues in the character of the crucified one, the crucifixion is permanent in its efficiency and its effect.

In the eyes of the apostle that was what was true. Can you get to this Christ through the preaching of God? can you see this Christ through the preaching of Paul?

I hope you do through the preaching of the pulpit here. Whatever the preacher is like, that you would see Christ through that preaching.

[ 65 : 39 ] What is the reason for the preaching of the Christ who was crucified? Well, the gospel tells us it is to bring salvation to the lost.

We cannot exclude from it that God is to be glorified by it. That is, of course, the case. But the ultimate end of preaching the gospel is that sinners would close in with God's provision of our Savior and commit their souls to his keeping.

You know, go back to verse 17 of the first chapter there. Paul says, Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.

For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness, but unto us which are saved it is the power of God, the preaching of the cross, the power of God to all who would believe.

Later on in the same epistle, we find Paul saying, though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of, for necessity is laid upon me.

[ 67 : 04 ] Yea, woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel. Paul is saying, what else can I do? This is what God has given me to preach.

What else can I preach except what he has given? He has given me to tell you about this Christ, because this Christ must be believed in, this Christ must be trusted, this Christ must be the Christ in whom we look to have our sons dealt with.

I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified. I think at the heart of that determination is the fear that some distraction would come his way, that would take him out of the way, that would take him off course, that would point him in the wrong direction, that would make something else of less import, more important, than what is ultimately the most important thing any one of us can believe in, and that is that Jesus Christ died on the cross for sinners.

Sometimes when you listen to Paul, just try and read the word, and you listen to him, and you think, you know, Paul really believes that everything hangs upon himself.

That the urgency, that the fervor, that the desire that is in his heart for sinners to come to Christ, it's as if he really believes that it all hangs on his fervency, on his shield, upon his desire.

[ 68 : 57 ] Of course, that's not the case, because he knows that salvation is all of grace. But then again, he's not going to excuse his coldness, he's not going to excuse his indifference, he's not going to excuse any energy that should be coming from him, because he knows God will work, whether I work or not.

He is persuaded of the need for the Spirit of God to apply the message that he has been given to preach.

It's MacJane who said, and MacJane said a lot of things that were very wise. A man, he says, cannot be a faithful minister of Christ until he preaches Christ for Christ's sake.

There's a lot of wisdom in that. A man cannot be a preacher of Christ, a faithful preacher of Christ, until he preaches Christ for Christ's sake.

It's not a calling other than the calling of God to present the only salvation available to sinners. Well, may you understand that, may you appreciate it, that the preacher of the gospel is somebody upon whom God has placed this burden and for whom prayer is needed and for whom the word of God is to be all important in the way that the truth of God is presented by them.

[ 71 : 03 ] We need it in our generation, we need it in this pulpit, we need it in all our pulpit, that we would have the likes of Paul the apostle presenting the gospel of Jesus Christ and whom crucified.

All that that involves, all that that entails, because that's the gospel you need to hear and I need to hear. That's the gospel.

Not only do we need to hear it, we need to believe it, we need to believe it and praise be that God will give you the grace to help you believe it if you're struggling with it.

May you pray for that help that he is ready to give. Let us pray. Lord, hear our prayers. We pray for your blessing upon your word at every time and opportunity that it is presented.

We anticipate in a few days' time to be present in this congregation when the gospel is preached by various individuals.

[ 72 : 21 ] May we understand that our greatest desire would be the desire of one who came to the apostles aboard and said, so we would see Jesus.

May that be our desire. Forgive us in him. Amen. We're closing Psalm 145, the first version of the psalm, and we're singing from verse 13.

Psalm 145, at verse 13, unread.

Thine thou openest liberally, and of thy bounty gives enough to satisfy the need of everything that lives. the Lord is just in all his ways holy in his works all God's near to all that call on him in truth that on him call these four stanzas verse 13 to 18 Psalm 145 the first version of the psalm thy kingdom shall forever stand thy kingdom shall forever stand thy reign through ages on God praises on that have done upon the blood the eyes of all things wage on thee the giver of all good the peaceful which of love sale earth

Thine hand thou opened us, lebray, and all thy body gist.

[ 75 : 26 ] Enough new scientists find the need of everything that lives.

The Lord is just in all His ways, holy in His world long.

God's near to all that call on Him in the booth that on Him call.

Now may grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit rest and abide with you, one, ever and always. Amen. Amen.