

We Preach Christ Crucified

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Preacher: Malcolm Macdonald

- [0 : 00] We begin our service singing to God's praise from Psalm 119, Psalm 119, verse 57, and we're going to sing the whole of this section of the psalm.
- Thou my sure portion art alone, which I did choose, O Lord, I have resolved and said, But I would keep thy holy word.
- With my whole heart I did entreat thy face and favour free. According to thy gracious word, be merciful to me. I thought upon my former ways, and did my life well try.
- And to thy testimonies pure, my feet then turned thine. I did not stay nor linger long, as those that slothful are. But hastily thy laws to keep, myself I did prepare.
- Bands of ill men be robbed, yet I thy precepts did not slight. I'll rise at midnight thee to praise, even for thy judgment's right.
- [1 : 11] I am companion to all those who fear and thee obey. O Lord, thy mercy fills the earth, teach me thy laws, I pray.
- The section of Psalm 119, verse 57, verse 64. Thou my sure portion art alone, which I did choose, O Lord.
- Thou my sure portion art alone, which I did choose, O Lord.
- I have resolved and said that I would keep thy holy word.
- With my whole heart, thy dead and treat, thy face unfavoureth me.
- [2 : 29] According to thy gracious word, be merciful to me.
- I thought upon my former ways, and did my life well try.
- Until thy testimony choose, my feet then turn it die.
- I did not sin nor linger long, as those that slothful are.
- But history, thy loss to keep, myself I did repair.
- [4 : 06] Bands of the men, hero of Jedi, thy precepts did not slight.
- I'll rise at midnight thee to praise.
- Here for thy judgments right. I am companion to all those who fear and be obeyed.
- O Lord, thy mercy fills the air.
- Teach me thy laws, I pray. Let's join together in prayer.
- [5 : 26] Gracious God, as we come before you, we give thanks that we can raise your name in song.
- And that it is something that we are inclined to do when our heart is glad. And that by nature, our instinct is to sing and to rejoice by way of song.
- And we do that whether we are songbirds by nature or even if we feel that our melody is dull. It is our inclination.

And that makes us think that you have given us this. This as a part of our creaturehood created in your image.

That we would not only praise you with the words of our mouth, but also with these words brought to your ears by way of song.

[6 : 39] And you have emphasized that by giving us the songs to sing. And these songs are contained within your own word.

The psalms and the hymns that are contained within the scriptures of the Old Testament. We bless you and thank you that we can joyfully take these words with the assurance that they are good words.

Because they are the inspired word of the holy living and true God. And while we see that it is appropriate to sing songs of human composition in our free time and in places of informal fellowship, it is nevertheless what is prescribed in your word that is appropriate to the worship of the holy living and true God.

And while that statement may have created division within your church throughout the ages, we cannot but embrace the truth.

And the truth is what will determine what you have required from us. That it is what you command and what you require at our hands that we must bring.

[8 : 19] And you require of us that when we worship, we worship in spirit and in truth. And our prayers are offered depending upon the guiding of the Holy Spirit.

And if you and your wisdom see fit to make us silent in our prayers, that we cannot offer them, we cannot find words to express, help us to be reconciled to your will for us in that situation.

I am thankful that there is one who will plead our cause in the courts of heaven. Even the one of your right hand, who is the great priest, the high priest of his people, whose role it is even now as we gather in his name, to plead our cause on the basis of his merits.

That he is the great intercessor. And where he seeks from us to come, he endows us with his word, or he encourages us to rest in the work of the Holy Spirit on our behalf, with groanings and utterings that cannot be heard.

And yet they are heard in your presence. We bless you and thank you for the wonder that is your word. We rest upon it and we depend upon it.

[10 : 01] It is a very food for our souls and we give thanks that nothing satisfies our soul quite like it. Whatever the word of man is, we are thankful for the provision that you have made for us in fellow sojourners here in this world who will be able to speak a truth that they have discovered for themselves and that they will be able to construct words that are so suitable to our needs and so helpful and encouraging.

And yet they are undergirded by the truth of the Most High God. And it is that truth that you have promised that will not return unto you empty.

You have decreed its purpose, what it means and what it is to communicate to us. Sometimes it is to encourage, sometimes it is to embolden, sometimes it is to bring us to a sense of our need, sometimes it is to bring us into a sense of our shame and it humbles us and it reminds us of our sinfulness and the need that we have to confess these sins in the presence of God.

So we bless you for the instruction that your word brings to bear upon our lives. We remember before you all who are present here today.

They join with us in prayer. Their prayers may not be heard, but it is the mystery of your provision that when one leads the others, join in with that prayer and that unity and unison of prayer is heard where the ear of man is consecrated and where the ear of God is ready to receive the concert of the petitions of the saints here on earth.

[12 : 21] We marvel at that, that even as we pray here in this small group of people, that we are joined with others in the neighbouring congregations throughout our community and throughout our nation and even beyond.

That there are Christian souls who call upon their God in the name of Christ and each voice is heard and all voices are heard and our praises and our prayers are distinguishable to the ear of the God who gave us voice.

So we pray, Lord, that you would prove to us even now that you are a prayer hearing God and a prayer answering God and that you may present yourself amongst us in a meaningful way so that we would know that you are touching our heart and mind in a powerful and a God-honouring way.

And we bless you and thank you that that honouring to God is your provision to us and that as you create that in us that we are able to respond in faith to what you are doing in our lives.

Bless our homes, our families, the old and the young and the middle-aged amongst us, whatever their need may be. Preserve us in a day that is so far removed from what it should be.

[13 : 59] But what generation has not proved itself to be so in need of salvation and so far removed from the God who is the Saviour that we do not need to be turned once again to you.

So do that for us, we pray. Pour out your Spirit upon us. Rend us under the heavens and come down. Not at our asking, but because we ask it in the name and for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Lift it up in the Gospel as he was lifted up between two thieves on the cross, crucified and slain for sin. We bless you and thank you for the place that he has in the hearts of his people today.

Wherever they are to be found, bless our homes, bless our families, bless our neighbours and friends. Oh, may the blessings of God enrich and add no sorrow.

Remember our nation, our all begotten nation that has so gone away from the truth of God, we pray that you would draw us to yourself.

[15 : 15] That our First Minister, our Prime Minister, the parties that they represent, the parliaments that they are governing, we pray that you would speak amongst them and speak through your people.

though they be few in number, may they exercise influence on the policies and the laws of the land. We pray that you would bring us to yourself.

Remember the nations that are at war. We pray, Lord, that you would speak peace to them and that Christ would be lifted up as the peace given, that he alone is the one through whom, through lasting peace comes.

He has, as we heard so recently, he has torn asunder the temple veil from top to bottom and we give thanks that he did that and gave us access into the Most Holy where we pray to you who hears prayer and we ask that you would because of the entrance into that place by the Son of Man who is the exalted Son of God that he is the one who will plead the cause that is his.

Watch over us in this day, remembering the sick amongst us, those who need healing, those who are beyond healing as far as man's activity is concerned. We pray for your own healing to be administered to all such.

[16 : 51] Remember, those housebound, hospitalized, confined to the hospice, those who are terminally ill for whom recovery is not possible. Bring peace to them, we pray, and that they may find solace in Christ and may all their needs be met in him.

Remember the grieving and the sorrow for those whose hearts have been rent asunder by the pains of death may they be reconciled to the one who is the way, the truth, and the life.

Hear our prayers on their behalf, whatsoever we ask. In Jesus' name, Amen. Let us sing again to God's praise from Psalm 34.

Psalm 34. At the beginning of the psalm, God will I bless all times His praise my mouth shall still express, my soul shall boast in God, the meek shall hear with joyfulness.

Extol the Lord with me, let us exhort His name together. I sought the Lord, He heard and did me from all fears deliver. They looked to Him and lightened were, not shamed were their faces.

[18 : 04] This poor man cried, God heard and saved him from all his distresses. The angel of the Lord encamps and round encompasses all those about that do them fear and to them delivereth.

and so on to verse 10. And six stanzas from the beginning, God will I bless all times, His praise my mouth shall still express. God will I bless all times, His praise my mouth shall still express, my soul shall boast in God, the meek shall hear with joyfulness.

Exol the Lord with me, let us exalt His name together.

I saw the Lord, he heard and did me from all fears deliver.

They looked to him enlightened, not shamed where their faces.

[19 : 52] This poor man cried, God help and save him from all his distresses.

The angel of the Lord, and come, and round and come, passeth.

And that of heaven, he ha tried and did me live.

O taste and see that God is good, who trust Him, Him is blessed.

Fear God is saved, none that in fear shall be with one proressed.

[21 : 21] The lions young may hungry be, and they may lack their food.

But live and truly seek, the Lord shall not again be good.

We're going to hear the word of God as we have it in Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians, in the first chapter, and we're going to read at verse 18.

Verse 18 to the end of the chapter. 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?

[22 : 51] 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. For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom.

But we preach Christ crucified, and to 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 men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called.

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.

[24 : 03] 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 doubt, that no flesh should glory in his presence.

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, let him glory in the Lord. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Lord, that is blessing to a reading of his word, and to his name be the praise. We sing now Psalm 14. Psalm 14, the whole of this psalm to God's praise.

Psalm 14, the whole of this psalm to God's praise.

[25 : 28] Yea, sure, there is not one. These workers of iniquity do they not know at all, that they my people eat as bread, and on God do not call.

There fear they much, for God is with the whole race of the just. You shame the counsel of the poor, because God is his trust. Let Israel's help from Zion come, when back the Lord shall bring his captives.

Jacob shall rejoice, and Israel shall sing. Psalm 14, the whole psalm to God's praise. That there is not a God, the fool doth in his heart conclude.

That there is not a God, the fool doth in his heart conclude.

They are corrupt, their works are vile, not one of them the good.

[26 : 45] Upon men's sons the Lord from heaven did cast his eyes abroad.

To see if any understood, understood, understood, understood God.

They all together fill the hour.

They all the signs are gone. And there is none that doeth good.

Yea, sure, there is not one. These workers of iniquity Do they not know at all?

[28 : 16] That they, my people, eat as bread And on God do not call.

That fear they much more. God is with the whole race of the last.

You shame the counsel of the poor Because God is his trust Let Israel's help from Zion come When back the Lord shall bring His captives, Jacob, shall rejoice And Israel shall sing I will sing I guess for a short time to turn to the passage read

New Testament Scripture This is the first verse 1 This is the first verse 1 This is the first verse 1 We will read at chapter 1, verse 23 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 And the wisdom of God When you read the history of the New Testament church There are many things that come to light That you may not be immediately aware of Things that are not perhaps disclosed Within the scriptures that you've taken notice of

For example we're all aware of Paul writing two letters to the church in Corinth But the city of Corinth is not a place that we're very familiar with I think it's an eye-opener to us to remind ourselves that the city of Corinth was actually built upon the ruins of another city And even that statement itself is a reminder to us of how changes occur within the history of a people or a geographical area We're surrounded in the places that we live in By evidence of previous generations Generations that existed

[31 : 58] We don't know how far back Some of them in recent memory There are the ruins of black houses There are stones that speak of people living there at some point But they are no longer with us And the homes that were once homes are no longer deserving of being called that I remember visiting over in South Laughseer in RNC Going over to Stemreweig It's a beautiful place Do you ever want to go to a place like that?

And a day like this It's a beautiful place It's a wee bit off the beaten track But you follow the coast Or you can cut along from RNC And you'll find the ruins of several villages that were dofted along the coastline there And they speak of a people That once existed quite happily within these houses But they had to move away because of circumstances And it's just a reminder to us Of the transient nature of life Generations come and generations go Corinth was a place like that A city built upon the ruins of a city And it was a city that was built According to history by Julius Caesar Now whether that's right or wrong I'm not sure But it was right in the middle of a path

Or a roadway that went from east to west And the road, like all roads, are said to have led in these days to Rome Every road led to Rome And this was a place where the merchants And those who made their living from selling and buying and bartering goods They would walk this road on their way to Rome Or from Rome And at the time that Paul wrote this epistle He was writing to a people who were It's a very populous area There was many, many people living in Corinth at the time And some of them were influenced by Roman society Some by Greek society And others because of the cosmopolitan nature of the area They came from different parts

The desire to make their wealth Took them to this place So that meant there was a very rich cocktail Of different experiences And different cultures Merged into one But the opinion that prevails about The city of Corinth and the area roundabout Was that those who lived there were intellectually alert That they were materially prosperous But sadly they were morally corrupt They were morally corrupt They had many things to commend them But sadly Because of the way they lived their lives God did not feature Very highly In the reckoning

And the origins of the church Are described to us And that's a strange thing Is it not? What we've described there Is a place Which is not hospitable To the gospel A place of moral corruption You wouldn't expect the gospel To thrive in a place like that And yet That is the very place That God sent Paul to If you read in Acts 18 On the second missionary journey He went to Corinth And he established a church there People came to faith Out of that Menu of corruption People believed in the Lord Jesus Christ And trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ And they established a church there And That's what we need to remember It's so easy for us to think

[36 : 48] That If we live in a society That has forgotten God If we live in a community That Has relegated God to the back Burner As it were That God is no longer Willing Or able To work In that kind of Situation But that's so wrong It's probably The last place That you would go to As a A preacher Of the gospel If you wanted An easy life And yet Paul wasn't interested In an easy life He wanted To present Christ To sinners In need of a saviour And these sinners Some of them Turned to Christ And believed in Christ And the church That bore his name Was established We can't see how many Came to faith In that place But they certainly Came to faith

And yet Because of Its location And because Of The atmosphere In which the church Had to exist It brought its challenges Again That's something You need to remember You need to remember That wherever the church Is The church Has to exist As a church Bearing testimony To Christ In a Situation That is reluctant To pay homage To that Christ And very often Is hostile To that Christ And the church Will not just Experience that hostility Hostility It may succumb To the influence That that society Exerts upon it That's what was

Happening in Corinth This is the This letter Is a result Of how These Influences Not for good Were affecting The witness Of the church In Corinth One of the Commentators That I was Reading Was a man Called Roger Ellsworth And I I took a note Of the Commentary Commentary Was written And published In 1995 Just Short of 30 years Ago And He He speaks At the very Outset Of the Commentary He tells us Something about The situation Into which The gospel Was coming And his Observation His comment Was That the Church Was contaminated By society's

Sins And Confused By its Thinking The church Not just The people Who were Round about The church But the Church Itself Was Contaminated By society's Sins And confused By its Thinking But then he Makes this Comment And really It's An eye Opener He said 30 years Ago We live In a Day Of Muddled Thinking And Messy Living Ours Is a Sick Age Ours Is a Sick Age 30 Years Ago But the Thing is You could Say that In any Generation Maybe you

Could There are Those I read Who say Very Emphatically Things are Never as Bad as They are Now But Certainly I Wholeheartedly Agree With the Thought That We're Confronted With Muddled Thinking And Messy Living And If Our Society Is Not Sick Then It's Not Far From Not Just Sick But Being Terminally Ill And You see That In The Way That Our Governments Govern And Those Who Support Our Governments Applaud Their Misdeeds More Than They Applaud The Laws That Honor God But What We Remember Here What We Discover Here Is This That Paul As The

[41 : 53] Preacher Needed To Preach Christ To That People He Needed To Preach Christ In Places Such As Corinth And While It Was Not An Easy Task The Preacher Paul Often Throughout His Epistles Alerts Us To The Fact That The Role That He Fulfilled That He Occupied Was The Role Of Somebody Who Proclaimed Christ He Was In The Task His Task Was His Role Was The Proclamation Of The Gospel Of The Truth Calling People To Hear The Gospel Pressing Home The Need That There Was For Those Who Were Hearers Of The Gospel

To Believe The Gospel And To Understand Why They Needed To Believe The Gospel And Trust The One Who Is At The Heart Of That Gospel Because Their Soul Was Sick And Terminally Ill As I've Said And The Only Physician That Could Deal With Their Need Was The Physician Of Souls Jesus Christ His Role Was To Point Men And Women Young And Old Whoever It Was That Came Within The Compass Of His Hearing That He Presented Christ To Them And Reminded Them Of The Wisdom Of Trusting In Them And Having Trusted In Them It Didn't Stop There As I've Often Said To You Believe On The Lord Jesus Christ And You Will Be Saved But

That's Only The Beginning Of The Story Yes You Will Be Saved But Saved To What You Will Be Saved To Live Your Life In Him For Him To His Glory As Long As You Have Breath In Your Body That Is What You Are Called To Do Not Let Rest On Your Glorals Not Just Say Well I'm Saved I'm Happy Now But Believe In Order To Proclaim Christ To Others By Way Of Your Life And The Transformation That He Has Brought To Bear Upon It Well What Can We Say About This Gospel That Paul Preached He Says He Preached Christ Crucified We Heard Something Of That Christ Crucified Last Weekend We Heard Of His Physical Crucifixion We Heard Of Some Of The

Reasons Given Why He Had To Die On The Cross But If You Read Through This Epistle Of Paul Carefully One Thing That Was The By Product Of The Kind Of Life That The People In Corinth Led Was That They Were Terribly Man Centred They Were Terribly Man Centred I Was Thinking Before I Began To Look At This I Was Thinking One Of The Many Books I Had Written By John Blanchard And He Is Talking About Why We Should Believe In Jesus And One Of The Thoughts That Came To My Mind Was That That I Could Be Wrong On This I Can Only Speak For Myself That When You Begin Those Of You Are Christians When You Begin To Think About

Think Seriously About Your Soul One Of The Thoughts That Comes To Mind Is Why Am I Here What's The Reason For My Life Why Am I Living What's The Purpose Of Life Now At The Heart Of That Question Usually Is This Me Myself I And If Not That Those Who Are Immediately In A Relationship To Me It's Very Man Centred It's Not Why Did God Put Me Here God Doesn't Really Feature At That Moment In Your Thought Maybe It's Wrong For Me To Say That But When The Thoughts That Press Upon Your Heart Begin To Formulate And Come

[46 : 56] To Expression In Questions The Question That Burns Is Why Why Me What Is it That I'm Here For What Am I Expected To Do Where Am I Expected To Go What Is The End Of My Existence How Is It All Going To Come To An End Is It All Going To Come To An End With My Death And Dissolution In Death And Then You Think Well What Have I Achieved What I Accomplished What Will Be Remembered Again These Thoughts They're All About Me They're All About What I Did Where I Went What I Said Or What People Thought Of It What People Remember Of It Now In Paul's Day The Corinthians Were

Very Much Like That They Were Thinking About Themselves And What They Were To Gain Personally And One Effect Of Our Society I Think Is This That We Tend To Gravity Towards People With Opinions That We Share Or That We Can Readily Acquiesce In And We Have No Lack Of Individuals Who Present Themselves And Their Thinking To Others And If We Feel Ill Equipped To Have Thoughts Of Our Own That We Can Present To Others Then Then We We We Ally Ourselves To Those Who Are More Expressive Than We Are And We We Line Up With

Their Thinking And I've Often Said That We Live In A Generation That Is In The Grip Of The Cult Of Personality Whether It's The Television Star The Pop Star The Football Star Film Star Doesn't Matter The Personalities That Are That Are Presented To Your Eye Constantly Daily By Newspaper By Television By Way Of Film These Are The People And Your Eye Is Directed To Them Now That's All Very Well And If You're If You're Easily Distracted By What They're Doing Or What They're Involved In That's Fair Enough But It's When These Personalities Begin To State What They Think And Influence What You Think That's Where There Are Dangerous That's When There Are There

Are Hazards In The Way So That If These Thoughts Of The Superstars Which Has A Huge Influence On Society Become Imbued To The Degree That Their Thoughts Become Your Thoughts Your Feelings Your Your Your Your Anger Becomes Comes From Their Anger Their Belief System Whatever It Is Becomes Your Belief System Then There Is A Clear Danger What Has That Got To Do With Paul Stay Well That's You See The Problem In Corinth They Had Their Own Superstars They Had Their Own Politicians And Philosophers And They Had The Gift Of The Gab And They Were People Who Drew Men To Them And Probably Women I'm Not Sure What Society Was Like

What Place Women Had Within That Society It Vary From Community To Community Depending On The Influence Of Greek Policy Or Roman Politics But These Men Exerted A Great Deal Of Influence On Their Society By The Power Of Oratory What They Had To Say Was Listen To And When It Was Listen To It Was Believed By A Great Many And They Had So Many Disciples And Followers Because Of This Power That They Had To Impress Itself On Others Commentator Don Carson Writes The Following Both Of Paul's Epistles Demonstrates That Believers In That City Were Constantly Tempted To Attach Themselves To Strong Leaders And Then Look Down On Others Fascinated By

[51 : 57] The Rhetoric Of Learned Scholars Of Their Day The Corinthians Were Sometimes More Impressed By Form And Show Than By Content And Truth Now That's Going Back A few Centuries But Does Not Echo With Some Of The Things That We Are Bombarded With Opinions Beliefs And Because Of The One Who Expresses Them They Are Meant To Be Considered As Worth Having Or Worth Espousing And Worth Sharing Or Are You Saying I'm Not Influenced I'm Not Affected By These Things These Guys I Know What They Are I Know Who They Are I Know Where They Are Coming From They Don't Really Have Much To Do With My Life Don't You Believe It Don't

You It If You Go To Your Media And You Find There How Many Influencers Strange Word Is it Not Influencers Who Are These Influencers I Mean You Would Hardly Call That A Trade But That's What Some People Say They They They They Have By Way Of A Trade They Are Influencers They Have Something To Say That They Believe Worth Saying And They Set Out To Influence The Thinking And The Actions Of The Younger Generation And Not So Young And Some Of The Things That They Seek To Do I Would Hold At Arm's Length At Any Cost I Know That God Can And Does Use Means And God Can And Does Use

People To Exert Influence For Good On Others But I Would Be Very Surprised If The Most Influential Christian Speaker Or Communicator Drew People To Themselves Before They Drew Them To The Passion Of The Lord Jesus Christ If They Do They Are Not To Be Listened To The Most Able Communicator Of The Gospel Truth Is One Who Speaks Not Of Himself But Of Christ Who Speaks Not Of The Need Of The Individual But The Need Of The Person In Connection With The Needs Of Their Soul And The Way Christ Is To Meet That Need The Soul Purpose Of The Christian Preacher Is To Communicate The Truth Of God And The Truth Of God In Order To

Point People In The Direction Of Christ Who Is The Remedy For The Ills Of Our Soul Away From Our Sails If You Read Down In This Chapter Towards The End Of The Chapter What Do You Find Paul Says God Hath Chosen The Foolish Things Of The World To Confound The Wise God Hath Chosen The Weak Things Of The World To Confound The Things Which Are Mighty And Things Of The World And Things Which Are Despised Hath God Chosen Yea And Things Which Are Not To Bring To Not Things That Are That No Flesh Of Him Are He In Christ Jesus Who Of God Is Made Unto His Wisdom And Righteousness And Sanctification And Redemption And According As It Is He That Glorified Him In The Lord In other words

The Purpose That Paul Sees For Himself Is To Preach Christ Not Paul To Proclaim Salvation To The Lost Through Christ The Redeemer And Not Through Following The Example Of Paul Although He Is Required To Present An Example To Those Who Are In The World He Is Required To Be A Good Example He Is Required To Show Others How To Live Their Lives As Those Who Are In The Lord But Because Of What Christ Is And Who Christ Is Later On In The Second De Paul Says We Have This Treasure In Earthen Vessels That The Excellency Of The Power May Be Of God And Not Of Us In Other Words He He He Considered Himself An Earthen Vessel Which You Would Say Oh Paul The Great Apostle Oh

[57 : 03] Paul The Great Apostle Was Just An Earthen Vessel Created By God To Contain The Awesome Wonder Of The Truth Of Jesus Christ We All Understand The Situation Where I Don't Know Where Something That Is Useful Stops Being Useful If You Just To Use A Silly Illustration If You Got A Brush And It Loses Its Bristles It's Not Useful It's No Use And Paul Considers Our Usefulness To Be Dependent Upon Our Relationship To The Lord Jesus Christ God Created Us For His

Glory And Without Christ We Are Incapable Of Bringing That Glory To The God Who Created Us For That Glory We Are Like Vessels That Have A Design To Contain Something And The Bottom Is Missing So It's Incapable Of Containing Anything You Are Created By God For His Glory And Christless You Cannot Give God The Glory That Is His The Scottish Preacher Eric Alexander Writes The Spirit Of Man Centredness Is A Gross Distortion Of The Very Essence Of The Christian Gospel Which Exalts God And humbles Man Exalts God

And humbles man so there are hymns somewhere that speaks of the desire for man to be big to be large to be great there be more and you can you can you can you can you can and at the same time embrace the humility that is required of the believer who has us all in Christ who receives everything from Christ who becomes what he is because of what Christ is what have we that we have not received is the sentiment that many believers have a right to express now I think this is where the difficulty is

For many Paul is writing his epistles to believers in the first instance the reading where we began read the preaching of the crosses to them that perish foolishness but unto us which are saved it is the power of God I'm speaking to you he says who are saved I'm speaking to you who understand the cross who understand who Christ is who understand the crucified who understand why he had to die who understand how he died who understand that he rose from the dead and we look to him still constantly depending upon as our intercessor and pleading our cause in heaven we have that but others you see don't to others Christ is foolish

To others how can how can death result in life is that not an anomaly how can the death of Christ result in life how can someone who is embarrassed or shamed by the manner in which he was judged and brought to judgment and crucified in ignominy and you know we sanitize the view of Christ on the cross but he was stripped naked and beaten to an inch of his life and he was paraded before the eyes of men and humiliated to the nth degree and yet you're supposed to believe that this is God's way of salvation and that's the way the word looks at

[62 : 04] And how can that possibly be I mentioned it before I was given a tape a long time ago before I was a Christian and the preacher was the lady and Paisley and I was no fan of Ian Paisley in my younger days I thought he was a troublemaker I thought he was responsible for a lot of the troubles in Northern Ireland in my growing up I didn't have a lot of time for him maybe those of you who are older will understand that and those of you are younger who don't know who Ian Paisley was but he was a preacher in the Free Presbyterian Church in Northern Ireland and he was no mean preacher and I remember him preaching a sermon and he well he he was very unlike me when he preached

He was listened to he was he was talking about the power the power the wonder working power of the cross of Jesus Christ and when he bombed that out people listened but even though it was the unpatriotic still true it is the power of the cross that the believer looks to for the salvation of their soul because however unseemly it is however unlikely it is however much it goes against the grain of your sensibilities what was to the Jews a stumbling block to the Greeks foolishness to those who are called it is both Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God and

I know what I would like to be I would know who I would want to be I would want to be one of those who believe in the power of God and the wisdom of God and who embrace the truth of God as it is in Christ Jesus on the cross now this is the problem that Paul had to confront there were those who rejected the gospel and I can believe that some of you are like them I have to believe that because it's true about you you have not professed the Lord Jesus Christ as your Lord you have not embraced the truth of God as it is in the gospel you have not put your amen to the wisdom of God as it is in the Christ

Who is crucified so you rejected it that's what you're saying I am rejecting this Christ but with good reason you're saying and what are these reasons pray tell you're saying perhaps like many others before you I need to see this Christ that you're speaking of for myself what will your Christ be like when you get to see him is he going to be different to mine is he going to be better than mine is he going to be different to the Christ that Paul presents no you're saying to yourself if you present to me evidence that I will

Believe If You Present To Me The Fruit Of The Supernatural Power Of God In My Life Then I'll Believe And Until You Are Influenced By The Power Of God So That You Know It Is Nothing Other Than The Power Of God You Are Saying To God I Will Not Believe You God Until You Do This Great Work In Me Until I Am So So Affected By The Spirit Of God At Work In My Heart And My Mind And My Body That I Can't But Believe That It Is Him And There You Are Putting Yourself In A Position Where You Are Saying To God Well God Whatever Your Way Is It's Not My Way This Is This Is What Needs

[67 : 07] To Happen For Me And If You Don't Do It My Way Then I'm Not Going To Believe What You Say Is Your Way I Was Telling Them In The Month On Sunday Night Something I Think It's Quite Incredible Really Something Quite Incredible And It Happened Just A Few Weeks Ago And Yet Many Years Ago I Remember Sitting In The Church When I Was An Unconverted Sinner And I Remember The Minister Preaching To I'm Telling This And When I'm Telling My Story I Remember It Vividly Telling My Own Conversion Experience Telling Of The Effect It Had On Me When The Minister Was Preaching To Those Who Were Sitting In The Pew With Their Grey Hair Sitting

Under The Sound Of The Gospel For Decade After Decade And Still Not Believing And I Saw One Person In Front Of Me And I Still See That Picture Of That One Person In Front Of Me And I Sensed That That Person Was Affected By What The Minister Was Saying But The Thing Was I Was Affected And How Was I Affected I Didn't Well I Had A lot More Hair Then And It Wasn't Grey But I Was So Fearful Of How Hard I Felt Under The Gospel That I Said To Myself If You're Like This Now What Are You Going To Be Like When You're Like That Person In Front Of You So

How Was It That This Came Just A Few Weeks Ago Well One Of Our Elders Told Me That He Was Working In The Home Of This Man That Was In Front Of Me And That He Told Him When He Was Having A Cup Of Tea With This Man In His Home Of How The Word Of God Touched Him That Very Moment Touched Him What I Sensed What I Felt For Myself And What I Thought That Was This Man's Experience I Had Never Heard From Anybody Until Just A Month Ago Of That Very Occasion Which I Thought Was Intensely Personal Intensely Private Nobody Had That Experience But Me But It Confirmed To Me The Way The Word Of God Works I Tell You That's The

Power Of God Whatever Way You Thinking The Power Of God Is To Be Interpreted It Is Not The Way You Might Think It Works He Works On The Brain He Works On The Heart He Works On The Emotions He Works On The Intellect He Works On Every Part Of Your Being He Cuts Across Your Providence And Says I Am Here Are You Paying Attention He Speaking To You Oh Cho For He O During That salvation is possible.

You know what Jesus said to those who came to him. Wanting evidence. He told them. Whatever signs that you. That you are after.

[71 : 17] They are not going to serve. The purpose that you mean them to serve. Do you remember? Jesus was met by those. And they had a legitimate question to ask him.

Or so they thought. Why does this generation seek after a sign? Verily I say unto you. There shall no sign be given unto this generation.

And he left them. Entering into the ship. Again departed to the other side. Why did he say that? Because. What they were putting so much.

Stock in. What's not going to save them? Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. To the saving of your soul.

Of your soul. Christ. The power of God. And the wisdom of God. Your society. My society. This generation.

[72 : 19] Can barely tolerate. Mention made. Of the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ. But the believer. In him. Are the only.

Is the only person. Who is persuaded. Of their. Of their status. Of their security. Of their safety. In him. Part of our problem.

Today. Is that. We are told. And retold. And it is. Reinforced. And emphasized. That this. Desire. That we have. To be happy. Is legitimate. And that. It can only. Be met. By what. This generation.

Supplies to. If. Your society. And my society. Is hedonistic. Is it. Pleasure seeking. And it is. And if that is.

[73 : 21] The end. Of everything. That's all. It amounts to. Be happy. Whichever way. Your happiness. Is secured. So be it. Be content with it. You've lived your life.

To the full. If you're happy. And you know it. And your happiness. Depends on what. What the moment. Brings.

And. You know. And I know. That each. Moment. That brings. The happiness. The world. Holds out to you. You will be.

Grasping. For something else. Something more. Something different. Something. Something. Something. Something. Something. You'll never satisfy. You'll never satisfy.

Have you ever asked yourself. The question. Why is it. That the best. That this world. Has ever brought you away. That you've not been happy.

[74 : 21] With it. Or that your happiness. Has not lasted. Why? Have you asked yourself. The question. I'm sure.

That every one of us. Have. At some point. Derived pleasure. From something. Some event. But. It's not lasting pleasure.

And why is that? Why? Because the only thing. That brings. Lasting satisfaction. Is a relationship. That is alive. And resting.

On the finished work. Of Jesus Christ. On the cross of Christ. On the power of God. In Christ. And the wisdom. And he says. That's the only thing. That's my answer.

To your question. If you're wanting to ask it. Of yourself. Put. Christ. Where he should be. In your life. And.

[75 : 19] That's where you will find. Satisfaction. Well. May God encourage you. To think of these things. Let us pray. Lord. Help us to believe.

That. The gospel. That Paul preached. Is the gospel. That we need to hear. In our day. In our generation. For all the advances. And for all the. The wonderful things.

That we. Have come to expect. As of ours. By right. We give thanks. For them. And yet. Do not allow us. To neglect. What you have provided.

For our souls. In the light. Of the great eternity. Cleanse from sin. In Jesus name. Amen. Reclosing Psalm. Psalm 100.

Psalm 100. All people. That on earth. Do dwell. Sing to the Lord. With cheerful voice. Themselves. With. The Lord. With. This place. For. Tell. Come. Before it. And rejoice.

[76 : 15] The whole. Of the psalm. All people. That on earth. Do dwell. All people. That on earth. Do dwell. Sing. To the Lord. With cheerful voice.

It. It. You.

Know. Know that the Lord is God indeed.

When thou thou hast seen us made, we are his broken heart's feet.

[77 : 27] And for his sheep he does not take.

O enter then his gates with praise, approach with joy his doors unto.

Praise God and bless his name always. For what is his degree so to do?

For why the Lord of God is good. His mercy is forever sure.

His truth has all times firmly seen. And shall promise to his endure.

[78 : 56] May grace, mercy, and peace be God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit rest and abide with you all and above all. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.