

The Power of the Cross

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Date: 30 August 2020

[0:00] Praise the Lord. 1 Corinthians 1 verses 18-24. It says this, For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness,!

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 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. Let's pray.

Lord, we thank you again that we can come and pray. Lord, for every family here, every man, woman and child. Lord, for each one, we pray, Lord, that your Holy Spirit would minister to our hearts.

[1:19] Dear Lord, as we open these words, may they open to our understanding, Lord. May we be stirred up, Lord, to a greater love for you, a deeper walk, a stronger faith.

Lord, stir us, we pray, in Jesus' name. Amen. The preaching of the cross. Preaching of the cross. I was reflecting lately on, in particular, what I'm preaching about tonight and thinking, what did they actually preach about in the Bible days, you know?

And you think of some people that preached and at the end of their preaching, they got stoned to death. You know, Brother Stephen in the Bible. And that was quite a telling sermon, wasn't it?

That he would be stoned to death after his sermon. You think, well, what should we be preaching?

The word of reconciliation, the word of faith, the preaching of the cross.

Christ crucified. Friends, just some thoughts. We won't labour this because we've got our main preacher coming up. But some would call the preaching of the cross foolishness. And when we were knocking on doors yesterday, Brother B is not here.

[2:35] But B and I were talking with a man and he thought, you know, we were labouring the point about the gospel, about the message of salvation. And he just said, I don't believe it.

I don't believe it. It might be possible, but I don't believe it. And it's kind of foolishness to consider that there might be such a thing, but not to act upon it. To have some thinking of believing without any foundation other than your own feelings or emotions.

We've actually got a book we can believe in. We've got the word of God, his word we can believe.

And the preaching of the cross, some would call it foolishness. They're more educated than that. To speak of the suffering of a bleeding man hanging on a cross.

Some would think that's a foolish thing. They would think, rather I would save myself, that I would need someone else to work a work for me. I can save myself. I can climb up some other way.

Rather than go through Jesus, the door. But no, there's no other way. There's actually no other way. And it's foolishness to some that we would need to trust that one, that one and only one, who shed his own blood.

[3:50] It's almost like it sounds too far out. Foolishness. Some would try by their own power to boast of their own wisdom.

I did it my way. They're not going to say that on the other side of heaven because no one's going to be in there who's made it their own way. There is no other way. Your own way is the wrong way.

There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death. Friends, the foolishness of the cross. It is foolishness to some. But to us which are saved, it says there, verse 24, it is the power of God.

Friends, why do we need the cross? We need the cross because we are broken. We are all broken. And we've got a man, Brother David, he's about to enter that daunting profession of being a pastor.

He's not quite there yet. In two weeks, something magical is going to happen. And no, something divine is going to happen. Amen. That he will be set apart for the ministry of a pastor.

[5:03] And, you know, for myself, as a pastor, you get to hear the worst of people. Honestly, you do. You get to see sometimes that human side of people, that is graphic, that is gross, that is sad.

Now, sometimes they confess their sin to me. Now, I don't have a little cubicle in the church here and I don't have a curtain and I don't put on a dog collar and they whisper their sins through the curtain to me.

But sometimes people do open up their hearts. And as the Bible says, confess your faults one to another. And sometimes they tell me, some tell me they struggle with pornography.

Some tell me how they've gotten drunk and they've acted like a dog returning to his vomit when they've tried to hide it. That vicious cycle that they're in, that bondage that captivates them, that holds them prisoner.

Some have injured themselves, and I hear about that, cutting themselves. Some have seen other people try and take their lives. These are graphic things for a man to hear about, for a man to consider about, for any of us to reflect upon.

[6:22] Some are going through an incredible family crisis and you wouldn't even know it today. People sat right next to you. There's a wreckage of sin, is there not? Don't we need the power of the cross?

Don't we need the foolishness of the cross? The power of God? And as someone who makes some weak, stumbling efforts, myself, to try to give some help, you hear of sin.

You hear of brokenness. Of human tragedy. Of the wreckage that sin causes. Of the hurting. It overwhelms me sometimes.

I'm just a man. And when I hear it, I just think, oh, it's grievous, is it not? And what is my counsel to someone, to those who are suffering?

The answer is not. The wisdom of the wise. It's not the understanding of the prudent. The wisdom of this world will utterly fail you.

[7:24] Utterly fail you. But there's power in the cross. There is power in the cross. That is God's answer, people. It's God's answer.

It's the one and only answer. I've sat across a kitchen table as someone has confessed their sin to me. Their shame, their hurt. For them, it was a bottle of bourbon.

They just had to keep getting that bourbon. They wanted to break free from the destructive power of the bottle over their lives.

I think they have got victory. They wept with me. I wept with them. My tears were dripping on the kitchen table as they prayed in repentance.

And it was powerful. It's the power of the cross, people. That's what it is. It was powerful. There's healing for the hurting. And it's not by the wisdom of the wise. It's not by the understanding of the prudent.

[8:23] It's the power of the cross. It's Christ and him crucified, friends. There's no other way. And, friends, healing is possible because of the power of the cross. That soul healing, there's power in the blood of Jesus.

We are broken. Friends, we are broken. And this is, I know someone is talking with me lately, and I absolutely agree with them that this is a hospital for the hurting.

The church is never going to be perfect. One day it will be glorious. Without spot or wrinkle or any such thing.

But for the meantime, this is a hospital. There's hurting people here. There's wounded people. And we know that we are all broken. None of us is immune to this.

Me too. It touches all of us, friends. We all need each other. That's why we're a church. And I've seen some blinded by their own judgmentalism of others who are themselves broken and maybe not even realizing it, saying, I should have preached harder.

[9:31] I should have really jumped on them like a ton of bricks. There's someone that was related to them. And I erred on the side of grace.

I erred on the side of pointing them to the cross. I erred on the side of thinking, but for the grace of God, so would I be. And look around you and see there's broken people here.

There's lots of broken people here. All of us. All of us need the work of the cross, friends. Every one of us. And there's people hurting here this morning.

You might not even realize it. You would think, oh, there are, you know, there's someone that the church looks up to. They've got all their act together, but friends, we're all in the same boat. We really are.

And there's hurting people. People are hurting that you don't even see. And people are impacted by great heartache. There's multiple marriage problems. The devil wants to destroy families.

[10:32] He wants to tear husbands and wives apart. That's not God's will. Not God's will. What should a preacher preach?

Repentance. To repent. Get it right. Get sorted with God. Turn around. It's a U-turn.

People are struggling with drug addiction. They're here. You know, this one who kind of blasted me.

It's saying you should be, you know, preaching against this one who's got a drug problem.

Not seeing their own problem. Not seeing their own problem. Some problems are more evident, aren't they? Some of these are. But, friends, some problems are not visible to the eye.

You know, really, as well as a pastor as well, that many, many more are not even here. They are backsliding. They are backsliding. Really, they are.

[11:44] Some might have a valid reason why they're not here. But there's plenty. And I've got hundreds of names of people that are not here.

They're not even here.

And they need your hand to reach out to them. That's why we've got this little booklets here. We didn't just print them for the fun of it.

These are the names and addresses and phone numbers of people that identify with this church.

But many of them are not here this morning. Who's going to reach them?

Does it have to be me every week to try in my humble effort? Well, can some of you make a phone call? Maybe you've lost your copy, but we've got numbers of these contact books here.

You know, so there's people that identify with this church, but they're not here. Maybe they actually need you to reach out to them instead of you being selfish. Not that you are, of course.

[12:40] But honestly, there's the backsliding. There's the people that are backsliding. They're not here. They're not going to any church.

They've just evaporated or they're too busy.

Look, we can all get busy. But friends, it's what about what we all can do. Reach out. And just to cut to a point here, it's the cross that we need.

Not that we worship some piece of wood. Rather, it's the instrument of his torture. We don't venerate a cross, but we venerate the one who bled and died on the cross.

We revere and uphold and honour and worship him, do we not? It's the cross. What it represents is his love, his blood. It's his power. It's the power and wisdom of God.

That's what we need. Not the power and wisdom of men. It's by the cross that he restores what is broken. Friends, the brokenness that is in this world through sin. The answer is the cross.

[13:41] The answer is the foolishness of preaching of the cross, of Christ and him crucified. And that's the word of reconciliation, that he brings people together, that he restores families that are broken.

He restores spiritual life that is lacking. He brings to life, eternal life inside of us. And by the cross, we have the word of reconciliation. By the cross, he restores what is broken.

And Paul said this in Galatians 6, But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world.

Friends, the cross makes a difference and the cross can minister to the broken. Nothing else can. Not the wisdom of the world, not the prudence of the understanding, the understanding of the prudent, but the foolishness of the cross.

Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God. Friends, this morning, I urge you, there's some here that are not saved. Don't delay to get right with God.

[14:48] Christian believers, if there's things you need to sort with God, get it sorted. Don't delay. There's a word called repentance. It means a U-turn.

It means a change, a transformation. Only God can do that. He can do that in your soul. Let's pray. Lord, we thank you that the power of the cross is available today.

It's the power of God unto salvation. That gospel, that good news of your saving, Lord, for your power. That at the cross, you showed your awesome power to deliver such as we. And, Lord, we pray for those that are backsliding, that are not even here present. And yet, for us too, may we not be standing in judgment of others, but realizing our own need. And being here to minister to others today. That you might help us to be a lifting up of others today around us. That we might all be lifted up to look at you and your wonderful work.

[15:49] And if there's any yet to trust you, they'll see that, yes, Lord, you died for me, for my sin. You died for my shame. You paid the very penalty that I can be delivered.

That I can have freedom from sin. I thank you, Lord, in Jesus' name. Amen. Thank you.