

We Have To Preach The Gospel

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[0 : 0 0] Let's turn again just a little to the chapter we read in 1 Corinthians chapter 9, looking at verse 16. For if I preach the gospel, that gives me no ground for boasting, for necessity is laid upon me.

Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel. Now in Paul's day, as we know, there were many, many public speakers. It was a day where there were great orators, people with tremendous intellect and tremendous gifts of being able to communicate thought.

And it was a day where the marketplace and the streets in many of the major cities were full of people. There were many people going around and they were talking and making great speeches.

And people with tremendous abilities and a lot of self-confidence. And that would have been the kind of environment that Paul arrived when he came into Corinth.

Now as we know, Corinth was quite an incredible city at that time. Corinth was a very vibrant city. You know sometimes when you go to cities, maybe if you go on holiday to a city or if you've been living in a city for a while, it doesn't take long to work out, in a sense, the feel of a city.

[1 : 3 4] Some cities have a vibrancy about them. You almost feel it on the street. There's almost like a beat on the street. There are other cities that sometimes you can almost feel a sense of threatening.

There are other cities you go to and you feel kind of dead. You feel that there isn't really a, there isn't much of an atmosphere in the city. Cities have different feels about them. And again, it might have a lot to do with an individual because you'll find one person will extol the virtues of one city and another will say, oh no, this other city is better.

But Corinth was certainly a city of vibrancy. It was also a very corrupt city. And it was a city where, you know the saying, anything went.

You could do whatever you wanted in Corinth. It was a very corrupt, it was a very immoral city. And it was the kind of city where there was a license really to do anything.

So it was into this city that the Apostle Paul came. And Paul, at a human level, was going to have to try and compete with a lot of these tremendous philosophers and orators.

[2 : 4 9] Because as we know, some of these people at that particular time were extraordinarily gifted. So from a human point of view, Paul was definitely on a loser. Because Paul himself will say that he couldn't match the oratory or the great skills that some of these people had.

He was very conscious of that. And in fact, Paul, earlier on in his letter, he tells the Corinthians that he didn't come with lofty words. He didn't come with enticing speech.

In other words, he wasn't coming and playing, as it were, to a gallery. Because it could be very easy to go and sort of try to manipulate people.

Because there are some people who are, if they're born orators, they have the ability to really sway a crowd. They're able by their speech and they're able to manipulate people to the point that they have people almost in the palm of their hand.

Well, the Apostle Paul wasn't like that. And he wasn't even trying to be like that. Because as he says, I didn't come with lofty speech. I didn't come with enticing words.

[4 : 01] I didn't, he tells us all these things earlier on. So the Apostle Paul comes into Corinth just very simply proclaiming the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And the thing is that the Apostle wasn't only up against it from a human point of view with regard to all the great orators of the day. But he was up against it with regard to the church in Corinth.

Because the Apostle's ministry, as he began to minister in Corinth, was very fruitful. And people were being converted.

But unfortunately, although it was at church, because they were very gifted people in Corinth. But as we know, one of the things that was sadly lacking in them was love.

That's why we have Paul's great thesis, as it were, on love in chapter 13. Where he's telling what love is and what love isn't. Because they were the kind of people they used to, their attitude towards one another was not Christ-like.

[5 : 10] Lacking in love. But they were very gifted. But they were very critical people. And they were critical of the Apostle Paul. And Paul was always having to defend his apostolic ministry.

And Paul was so passionate about the gospel. That we find that Paul was always having to put himself out for the sake of the gospel.

And that's why Paul, in this chapter, is saying, Look, in order that I will not put any hindrance or any obstacle in the way of the gospel, I'm not even going to take what I'm due.

I'm not even going to take what is my right. And I will become all things to all people in order that I may win your souls for Jesus Christ.

Paul was really quite an extraordinary man. He was tunnel vision as far as the gospel was concerned. He saw people as souls that were lost.

[6 : 11] And you know, that's something that is very easy to lose. When we look out at people, do we see them as people who have never dying souls?

Jesus was like that. We often read of how when he saw the crowds, he saw them like sheep without a shepherd. It tells us quite often about Jesus that he was moved with compassion towards the crowds.

Because he saw their need. He saw them. That's why he wept over Jerusalem as they rejected him. Because he had so much heart for souls.

Well, the apostle Paul had something of the heart of Jesus. Because he saw people. He saw their need. He saw their helplessness. He saw their future without a savior.

And so he had this burning passion to reach the lost for Jesus Christ. And so he was prepared to put himself out. And the few times that Paul gives his personal testimony along the way, we read something of just how he suffered for the gospel.

[7 : 20] He was shipwrecked. He was imprisoned. He was beaten up often. He wasn't just beaten up. He was stoned and left for dead. That's what he was suffering.

All was for the sake of the gospel. In fact, when Jesus called him into... Remember when Jesus met him on the road to Damascus, the risen Christ. And Jesus said that he was going to suffer an awful lot for the sake of the gospel.

And that's exactly what the apostle did. But he had this burning passion to preach. And so Paul makes this great statement where he says, For if I preach the gospel, that gives me no ground for boasting.

For necessity is laid upon me. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel. Now, Paul here says, If I preach the gospel, that gives me no ground for boasting.

Now, Paul, if any person had a, I suppose, could boast about his work. If Paul at the end of the day said, You know, sit down till I tell you what I've done.

[8 : 31] Well, Paul never did that. Paul, we read what has happened in various things. When we go through the Acts of the Apostles, we get a history of Paul's missionary journeys and some of the tremendous success that he had in his labors.

And Paul hints at what he's done. But at no point does he ever, ever boast. See, Paul forbids boasting. Now, some people are bad for boasting.

Now, there's a big difference between telling something and boasting about something. You know, two people can give the same information. And you know straight away that one is just telling you something.

And that there's no boasting in it. Whereas another can tell you the exact same thing. And you know that they are boasting. Well, Paul says that with regard to the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, whatever you do, do not boast.

And in fact, at another place he says, if you're going to boast, boast in the Lord. And that was one thing Paul was really, really good at doing, was boasting in Jesus Christ.

[9 : 40] He was always telling people about Christ. You know, if you really are passionate about a particular thing or a particular person, you will boast about them.

You will want to tell people about them or about this sort of thing. Well, that's how Paul was with Jesus Christ. He wanted to tell people about Jesus' love and his mercy and his grace.

And he wanted to tell people of him as a savior, of how he was able to deliver, of his justice, how true that he's a way, the truth and the life.

Paul couldn't stop boasting about Jesus. Remember how he said elsewhere that he was determined not to boast in anything, but in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And that is why it is so important that we heed Paul's words, that we don't boast, and particularly in the work of the gospel. Not just in preaching, but in any work that we are involved in, in the gospel, we must never, ever, ever seek to take the glory to ourselves.

[10 : 48] God is a jealous God, and he does not want his glory given to another. And it is one of the things that we must always, always guard against.

So Paul says, I do not boast. And again, there are various reasons why, supposing we just take it in its simplest form in preaching, but not just in preaching, in anything, in witnessing.

supposing you are working, teaching, or in the Sunday school, or amongst the youth work, it does not matter at what level, or what you are doing, there is no room for boasting.

And there are various reasons why. First of all, you are very conscious, in whatever you are doing for the Lord, of your own failings, your own shortcomings, your own weaknesses.

And sometimes it is a very difficult thing to preach. Because as you preach the truth, you yourself are so convicted of what you are saying.

[11 : 51] I preach to myself, as much as I preach to any one of you. Because you become so aware, you know when the truth is presented to you, the truth always challenges us, and forces us to focus, and to see right where am I, in relation to this truth.

Do I match up to it, or am I failing? And so, there is this awareness, in preaching, or in any work that you are doing, of how far short you come, from where God demands you to be.

So that straight away, knocks away this whole area of boasting. Again, there is the awareness, awareness, that in whatever work that you are doing for the Lord, whatever abilities, that you have in it, whatever you have, has been given to you, by the Lord.

What do we have? Think about it. This is what the Bible says. What do you have, that you have not received? Because whatever gifts, or whatever abilities that you have, that is exactly what they are.

They are gifts. They have been given to you, by the Lord. It is not something that you, all of a sudden say, well you know, this is me. I, nobody else has done this in me, but me, me myself.

[13 : 15] No. And you find that, and quite often you will, you will see that, even in the world of sports, sometimes you will, you will see, a great athlete, a great footballer, sometimes you know, it is a gift.

I have heard, quite often, people say, they were blessed. They are, this recognition, that what, the talent that they have, yes, they, they train, they work, they develop it, and so we do in all the different ways, but, the, the starting line, the bottom line is, it is a gift, it is being given.

So, that is why Paul says, you cannot boast in a gift, you cannot take honour to yourself, if you have been given something, and God, bestows gifts, on all his people.

You have gifts, and you have been given these gifts, for the good of others, not just for yourself, but for the good of others. That is what, what the Lord wants, his church, to be built up, and strengthened, by one another, so that we are all involved, and whether it is, sometimes it is even, just the warmth, of a welcome.

That can be a powerful thing. Just welcoming, someone, in a real, genuine, honest way. That can have a huge impact, upon people. When you do it, because you love people.

[14 : 36] Because you are a Christian, and you have a love, for people. All these things. So there is, all the gifts, that people are given, they are from the Lord. So Paul is saying, look, you can't boast.

And again, with regard to, the Lord's work, we are always dependent, on the power, of the Holy Spirit. Because if the Holy Spirit, isn't present, if the Holy Spirit, isn't working, then, nothing is going to happen.

We simply pray, that we will be channels, that the Lord will use, and that his Holy Spirit, will apply, whatever we do, for the good, of other souls.

And so Paul, was always, always, aware of this. Because, earlier on in chapter 2, this is what he said, my speech, and my message, were not in plausible, words of wisdom, but in demonstration, of the Spirit, and of power.

So Paul was saying, I was up against, all these orators, and all these people, with these tremendous, talents. And people, who were able, to manipulate others, and pull them aside, and take them in, and they would become, their leaders.

[15 : 52] That wasn't my aim. I was there simply, in, in, with, with a demonstration, of the Spirit, and of power. And that word, demonstration, means, legal proof, that's presented, in court.

And what was happening, is, this proof, it's a great word, the demonstration, of the power, of the Spirit. Because, what happens is, there is proof, where is the proof, that this is of God?

It is in changed lives, where people's, lives, are changed. And all of you, in here today, who have begun, to follow the Lord, Jesus Christ, whether it's a month ago, or a year ago, or ten years ago, or thirty years ago, or fifty years ago, doesn't matter, how long, you remember, that your life, was changed.

Because, think, something happened, in your life. Because, the Lord, came into your life, and changed, your way of thinking. Changed, your attitude.

Changed, your goal. You saw, life differently. In many ways, yes, life is still the same. But, Jesus becomes, the center of your life.

[17 : 14] You see things, in a totally different way. You depend, you learn to depend, upon the Lord Jesus. You have a, a love for him, that wasn't there before. You, you, you know, why you're here, you know, where you're going.

Your life, changed. It was real. It was proof. That is a proof. And that you have, continued to follow him, is a proof, of his work, within you.

And that's a great thing, about the gospel. It is real. That's why Paul, when he had the Holy Spirit, working with him, knew, that when lives, were affected, and touched, by the Holy Spirit, these lives, would be changed forever.

We live in a day, where, so often, we don't know, what is true, and what is not. We, you just look at the very situation, we're in just now, with the whole area of Brexit, and we hear, we, we've been hearing, and are hearing, so many people speak.

And people can be so powerful, and plausible, and you say, well, that makes sense. And then somebody, oh, that makes sense. But the thing is, sometimes, sometimes people can be 100% genuine, but sometimes people are out, they have their own particular agendas.

[18 : 32] Sometimes it's all about power struggles. And very often, there's, you're saying, you know, I don't know, I don't know what's true. And that's, you find that, so often, in so many different areas of life.

But this is the beauty of the gospel, that there's, there is no deception. There are no hidden agendas. There's no time to trick people.

It is as honest, as can be. This is it. And Jesus is saying, through his gospel, I want the best for you. And I guarantee you, if you come with me, your life, although I'm not saying, it's not going to be, you're not going to have troubles, and problems in this life, but I've overcome this world, and I have won everything for you.

And I will give you, what this world can never, ever give you. And I will then, at the end of it, take you to be with myself, forever. I will do you good.

Jesus guarantees that. And so, that's why the apostle was able to proclaim this, with his great passion. And that is why we have this, proof of the, the power of the Holy Spirit, working within people's lives.

[19 : 48] And this, same Jesus, this same Jesus, is able, to change your life. And that's why, Paul says, I preach the gospel, but then he adds, woe to me, if I do not, preach the gospel.

And, the gospel, of course, is, as he said earlier on, Jesus Christ, and him crucified. That was, Paul's message, wherever he went, was the gospel, of Jesus Christ.

And that is, always, every Lord's Day, when you come here, that will always be the message, is, the word of God. When we talk about, Jesus Christ, and him crucified, that, takes in, the whole message, of what this gospel is.

And that is why, it is so important, that, we are absolutely faithful, to the word. I must never come here, with my own ideas, or my own impressions, or my own agendas, and say, well you know, I'm going to, this is what I'm going to preach today.

We always just say, right, this is the word of God. And we try to proclaim, that word, in a way, and ask that the Lord, say to the Lord, Lord, take this word, and apply it, to everybody's heart, wherever we're at.

[21 : 05] And you know, this is the amazing thing, about God's word. It doesn't matter, where you are at, and everybody in here, you're at different places, in life, different things. Some of you might be having, going through, horrendous struggles, of mind, of body, within family, work, we don't know, and maybe nobody knows it, but you.

Other people might be, everything might be going, really well for you, just now. We get, there are so many, different extremes. But the wonderful thing is, that the word of God, is always suitable, for wherever we are.

Because God, is a personal God. And the Lord, deals intimately, and personally, with each one of us. And that is why, sometimes, it's just in a verse, that we read, or sing, or sometimes, it's something in the reading, or something in the preaching, and you say, wow, that, that was good.

You go, and you say, that, well, that, that did me good. You might forget the rest of it, but there's something. And that's what we really want, is that everybody, every day, will get a portion, will get their portion, will get, what is good, for their soul, something that will encourage them, strengthen them, guide them, rebuke them.

Because sometimes, we need rebuking, challenging us, exhorting us, encouraging us. And so, it's important that, we preach the whole, counsel of God.

[22 : 30] And so, the church, of course, mustn't be sidetracked, from that. And of course, the devil will always want us, to sidetrack the church, from being a faithful witness, within the community.

So, Paul is preaching, Jesus Christ, and him crucified. Jesus. Now, as we know, the name, Jesus, is, remember how, Mary and Joseph, weren't given, they weren't allowed, to choose, the name for the baby, themselves.

That name was given, by the angel. You shall call, his name, Jesus. Why? For he shall save, his people, from their sins. And Christ, of course, is the anointed one.

The name, the name was very important, to the Jew. Because the name, a name very often, was, indicating, the person, the character, something like, for instance, Moses.

Moses was called Moses, because, Moses comes from, to draw out. And remember, how Moses was, drawn out of the water. It's the same, with Samuel.

[23 : 40] Samuel, God has heard. Remember, how Hannah, was praying, and praying, praying, for a son. And God, heard her prayer, and answered, and gave her, little Samuel.

And so, that's why, he was called Samuel, God has heard. So, the name is important. Jesus, is a translation, of the Hebrew, Joshua. Which means, Jehovah, is salvation.

So, this is why, why Paul, was always preaching. Jesus, who shall save, the Savior, the Anointed One, the Messiah, the Son of God.

And that is, at the very heart. And it was, Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. Paul, didn't spend, his time, preaching, about, Jesus' teaching.

Although, nobody, ever taught, like Jesus. And don't get me wrong, we have to listen, to Jesus' teaching. When I talk, about his teaching, the teaching, that we find, in the gospel.

[24 : 40] Because all the word, of God, is Jesus' word. But we mean, specifically, his teachings, that we find, in the gospel.

Paul, didn't spend, all his time, on that. Although, nobody, taught with the authority, with the power, with the influence, that Jesus taught with. Neither, did Paul, home in, on Jesus' example, of his life.

Although, that is also, very important. Because we're told, in the Bible, to look at the example, that Jesus left us, and to seek, to follow him. We're told, these things.

But Paul, focused in, on the main thrust, of why Jesus, came into this world. And he came, in order, to die. And it's quite, remarkable.

Because so many, that's a thing, that people dismiss. So many people have, they know the historical, fact that Jesus, lived in this world. They know the historical, fact that Jesus died.

[25 : 43] And they say to themselves, at the age of 33, he died, with his dreams. So many people, have looked on, Christianity, as a failure.

Because they say, why follow somebody, who only, yeah, taught wonderful truths. But, he was gone, by the age of 33.

And sometimes people, actually, some great, people, although he's, he's gone back on that, Ted Turner, the great, news mogul, he once said that, Christianity was for losers.

Although he has since, said that, he doesn't agree with that, any longer. But, that, that's the way he looked on it. That, that following somebody, who, as far as he could see, was a loser.

He had dreams, taught, and lost, died on the cross. But, what Paul was teaching is, yes, Jesus, he deliberately died, on the cross.

[26 : 44] He went there, as our sin bearer. He took upon himself, what we couldn't deal with. God's love for us, was so great, he sent his son, and he said to his son, right, I want you to go into the world, and to represent my people, and I want you, this is going to be terrible for you, my son, but I want you, to give your life, as a sacrifice.

Because, I'm going to pour out, the wrath, and the punishment, that is due for sin. I'm going to pour out, my judgment, upon you. Yes, my beloved son, I'm going to do it to you.

Because I love all these people, and I want to save, all these people. And because I'm a holy, just, pure God, I can't just dismiss sin. It has to be dealt with.

And it can only be dealt with, either on the individual, themselves, or on somebody, who will stand in their place. And you, my son, are the only person, who can do that.

And Jesus said, to do your will, I take delight. And that's why, he came into this world. And that's why, he died on the cross. And in dying on the cross, and rising from the dead, he defeated death.

[28 : 00] He defeated the power of sin, the consequences of sin, the guilt of sin, the punishment of sin. It's all laid upon him, done away with. And he rose triumphant, over death, over the grave, over hell, over everything.

And that's the message, that Paul, couldn't stop preaching. And it's still the message, that we need, to hear today.

It's the greatest message, in this whole, wide world. Have you today, although you know this, I'm sure every single one of you, in here today, somebody said, or I said to you, in the words of the Philippian jailer, you know, what must I do, to be saved?

You'd be able to repeat that verse. Oh well, you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you'll be saved. I'm sure every person in here, today, knows that.

Question is, have you actually, believed for yourself? You're able to tell people, but have you, personally, believed?

[29 : 09] If not, ask Jesus today, Lord Jesus, help me to believe in you. I need you. Let's pray. Lord, we pray to bless us, we give thanks for, your goodness, grace, mercy towards us, and we pray, that you will help us, to see you, as a great saviour, to see the great sacrifice, for sin, to see that it's personal, that it's there for us, it's available for us today, and we pray, for any today, who still might be, outside the kingdom, that they will, oh Lord, reach out to them, and may they reach to you, and that they may close in, with you as saviour, even now, we pray Lord, that you will hear our prayers, and that you will bless us, bless the cup of tea, coffee in the hall afterwards, and take every single one, of us home safely, do us good, we pray, for giving sin, in Jesus name, amen, amen, amen, we conclude, our service, singing from, uh, Psalm 46, 46a, Psalm 46a, and that's on page 60, and the tune is, base of Harris,

Psalm 46a, verse 8, come, come see the works, the Lord has done, the judgments, he commands, the desolations, he has brought, to pass in many lands, in every land, throughout the earth, he makes all conflict cease, he shatters bow, and spear, and shield, and brings his reign of peace, be still, and know that I am God, on earth, exalted high, and all the nations of the world, my name, will glorify, the Lord Almighty is with me, to strengthen, and sustain, for Jacob's God, our strong defense, and fortress, will remain, 46a, on page 60, verses 8, to the end, and the tune is, base of Harris, come see the works, the Lord has done, come see the works, the Lord has done, the judgment, he commands, the desolations, he has brought, to pass in many lands, in every land, throughout the earth, he makes all conflict cease, each other, and spear, and shield, %uh, and prince's reign.

geo■■■■, and queen, He μας hygienLE, be still, on His throne, but justkmaile joy, I am God, of earth, exalted high, And all the nations of the world By Him will go free high The Lord Almighty is with us To strengthen and sustain

For Jacob's cross Thine strong defense And all the nations of the world Will remain Now may the grace, mercy and peace of God The Father, Son and Holy Spirit Rest and abide upon each one of you Now and forevermore. Amen.