

Worship of the Church – Teaching I Cor. 1:18-2:5

Thesis: To show that the power of preaching is in God, not man.

Introduction:

- A. Preaching the gospel is the most important thing that we could do in our lives.
 - 1. It is more important than any other job that one could have.
 - 2. This is why it is important for each of us to become teachers of God's word.

- B. Today, we will notice some things that Paul tells us regarding the teaching that should be done in the Lord's church.
 - 1. This is something that we can all be doing.
 - 2. Teaching is not reserved only for those who have some form of higher training.
 - 3. It is for all who are a part of the Lord's church.

I. "The message of the cross" is "Jesus Christ and Him crucified" (2:1-5).

- A. The only message that we should be preaching is "Jesus Christ and Him crucified."
 - 1. Notice the emphasis that Paul places on preaching the cross of Christ.
 - a. **I Cor. 2:1-2** - And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God. {2} For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.
 - b. **I Cor. 1:17** - For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect.
 - 2. Obviously, this entails many different things.
 - a. To preach the "Jesus Christ and Him crucified" means that we preach the things of Christ.
 - 1) **Mt. 28:18-20** - And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. {19} Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, {20} teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."
 - 2) **Acts 2:42** - And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.
 - b. When we teach "Jesus Christ and Him crucified," we teach of the life of Jesus and the example that He should be to us.
 - 1) Humility – **Jn. 13**

- 2) His response to His enemies – Mt. 22-23
- 3) Parables – Mt. 13
- 4) Miracles – Throughout the book of John
- c. When we teach “Jesus Christ and Him crucified,” we teach of what He wants us to do in order to inherit salvation.
 - 1) Acts 8:35-38 – Philip preached Jesus to the eunuch and he understood that he needed to be baptized.
 - 2) Acts 16:30-33 – Paul “spoke the word of the Lord to” the jailer and he was baptized.
3. The point is that we should be preaching “Jesus Christ and Him crucified.”
 - a. This would include preaching all of His word.
 - b. Acts 20:27 - For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God.

B. Because we preach “Jesus Christ and Him crucified,” the power in our preaching is from God, not man.

1. Again, notice how Paul went to the Corinthians.
 - a. I Cor. 2:1, 4-5 - And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God. {4} And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, {5} that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.
 - b. Paul was concerned with preaching the things of God, not pulling the heart strings of the Corinthians.
 - c. While there was emotion in his preaching, this was not the purpose of his preaching.
2. Today, the power of our preaching is from the word of God and not the wisdom of man.
 - a. Even though preaching will evoke certain emotions from others, the emotional aspect of our preaching is not the goal.
 - b. The power is in the word of God, not man.
 - 1) Acts 2:37 (it was the fact that they now understood that Jesus was the Son of God) - Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?”
 - 2) Heb. 4:12 - For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.
 - c. While there is emotion in our preaching, it is the word of God that convicts sinners, not the emotions of man.

II. It is only in “the message of the cross” that we can find true unity within the church.

A. Throughout this epistle, Paul is going to address certain issues that have divided the church in Corinth.

1. 1:10-17, 3:1-9 – Unity within the church
2. 5:1-13 – Sexual immorality
3. 6:1-11 – Brother would sue another brother
4. 7:1-40 – Principles of marriage
5. 8:1-13 – The conscience of one another
6. 10:1-23 – Idolatry
7. 11:17-34 – Conduct at the Lord’s Supper
8. 12-14 – Misuse of spiritual gifts
9. 15:1-58 – The fact of the resurrection
10. 16:1-4 – The collection for the saints

B. The only way to solve these types of issues is by going back to “the message of the cross.”

1. Today, while we may not face the “big” problems, we do face some of these kinds of issues.
 - a. We may hurt our brother by doing something that we know will violate his conscience.
 - b. There is a constant problem in the Lord’s church of some not using the talents (spiritual gifts) that God has given them.
 - c. There is always the issue of putting other things before God.
 - d. To some extent, we have the problem of unity in the Lord’s church.
 - e. The point is that no matter what the problem is, if we go back to “the message of the cross,” we will solve them.
2. There have always been those who would want to destroy the church in some way.
 - a. **I Tim. 4:1-3** - Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, {2} speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, {3} forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth.
 - b. Therefore Paul says: **II Tim. 4:2-4** - Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. {3} For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; {4} and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.
3. Again, the only way to handle them correctly is to go back to “the message of the cross.”

III. It is only in the message of the cross that we can find salvation.

A. Both the Jews and the Greeks had difficulty with “the message of the cross” (1:18-25).

1. The Jews could not believe that Jesus was the Son of God (1:22-23).
 - a. They had persecuted Him to the point of putting Him on the cross.
 - 1) They hated Him so much that they killed Him.
 - 2) They did not care about the good that He had done or the miracles that He had performed.
 - b. They had rejected Him as the Messiah.
 - 1) Mt. 21:42 (Jesus says that they have rejected Him) - Jesus said to them, “Have you never read in the Scriptures: ‘The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. This was the Lord’s doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes’?”
 - 2) Acts 4:11 (Peter tells the Jews that they have rejected Jesus) - “This is the ‘stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.’“
 - 3) I Pet. 2:7-8 (Peter tells the Christians that the Jews have rejected Jesus as the Messiah) - Therefore, to you who believe, He is precious; but to those who are disobedient, “The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone,” {8} and “A stone of stumbling and a rock of offense.” They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed.
 - c. The Jews could not accept Jesus as the Messiah.
2. The Greeks could not believe that someone would have to die in order for others to be saved (1:22-23).
 - a. They thought that it was foolish for someone to die and then be raised from the dead in order to purchase their sins.
 - b. In fact, they could not even comprehend the fact that someone could rise from the dead.
 - 1) Acts 17:32 (The Gentiles in Athens mocked Paul when he spoke of the resurrection of the dead) - And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked, while others said, “We will hear you again on this matter.”
 - 2) Throughout the preaching of Paul, he was persecuted by both Jews and Gentiles.

B. It is only “through the foolishness of the message preached” that we can be saved (1:18, 21-25).

1. It is through “the message of the cross” that we learn of what God has done to save us.
 - a. Jn. 3:16 - For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

- b. **Jn. 10:18** - No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father.
 - c. **Jn. 15:13** - Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends.
 - d. **Rom. 5:8** - But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.
 - e. "The message of the cross" is the gospel of Christ.
2. It is the gospel of Christ that has the power to save men today.
- a. **I Cor. 15:1-2** - Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, {2} by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you-- unless you believed in vain.
 - b. **Rom. 1:16** - For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.

Conclusion:

- A. Have you been obedient to "the message of the cross?"
- B. It is only through the cross that we can be saved.