

# WHAT IS IT TO PREACH CHRIST CRUCIFIED?

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2 CORINTHIANS 1:23-24 • TV105B

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By

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## **1 Corinthians 1:23-24**

*“But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, 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.”*

I have an interesting subject today. It’s interesting to me and I hope it will be to you. I believe it will be an instructive subject. I am going to speak on this topic: **“WHAT IS IT TO PREACH CHRIST AND HIM CRUCIFIED?”**

Now, in **1 Corinthians chapter 1:23** the apostle Paul wrote these words: *“But we preach Christ crucified unto the Jews (as unto the religious person) a stumbling block, unto the Greeks, (Gentiles, or natural men), foolishness (sheer nonsense, utter foolishness). But unto them which are called both Jews and Gentiles, (both religious and natural) we preach Christ crucified, the power of God and the wisdom of God.”*

Now my friend, there is one certain way that I can be like the apostle Paul. There are many ways in which I cannot be like Paul. I hear preachers always say: “Well, I’m like Paul.” Well, there is one way I can be like Paul. There are so many ways that I can’t be like the apostle Paul.

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First of all: He was an apostle; I am not an apostle! The apostolic office is discontinued; there are no apostles on this earth today. An apostle was one who had seen the Lord, who was a witness of his resurrection and who received his message directly from the Lord.

Now, that's an apostle. I am not an apostle and no one else out there in this world is an apostle. So, I am not like the apostle Paul in that I am an apostle.

Secondly: And I'm not like the apostle Paul in this regard; I cannot preach the Gospel in a language I have never learned!

Thirdly: And I cannot heal the blind and raise the dead!

Now, the apostle Paul had that power; he had those gifts. The early apostles and early disciples and some of the early believers were endowed with gifts of the Spirit; among them were the power and the ability to preach the Gospel in another language.

Now, we are not talking about an unknown gibberish; we are talking about a language. At Pentecost the people there heard the Gospel. There were people there from nations all over the world and they heard the Gospel in their own tongue, in their own language.

And God greatly gifted the apostle Paul with the ability and the power to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ in another language. There's no one going to profit by hearing me stand up here and rattle off a lot of unknown words that I don't understand and nobody else understands.

And that's not what's speaking in another language is; that's not what speaking in tongues are at all. Speaking in tongues is preaching, witnessing, and delivering the message of Jesus Christ in somebody's native tongue, so they can understand what's being said.

And I cannot; I don't have the power to raise the dead or to give sight to the blind. There's no need for me going out and holding a tent meeting or a campaign somewhere and taking up an offering and putting my hands on people and claiming that I have the power to heal.

Now, God can heal. The Scripture tells us in the Book of James *"that if anybody is sick in the church, let him send for the elders of the church and let him anoint them with oil (which is a symbol of the Holy Spirit) and let them pray for that person and he will be healed."* If it is God's will he will be healed; if it's not God's he will die.

God doesn't heal all sick people, some people die. *"It's appointed unto men once to die."* Many believers have sickness unto death and many believers have sickness in their lifetime.

There are many great men of God who have preached the Gospel who have been sick men; David Brainerd was one who was sick nearly all of his life. He died when he was 29, one of the greatest missionaries to the Indians the world has ever known.

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McShane, the great Scottish preacher died when he was 29. Spurgeon, the great English preacher was sick for 30 years and died at 58. John Calvin; you Presbyterians know who John Calvin was; he was a sick man most of his life.

God wasn't pleased to heal all sicknesses; he does some. But I can't heal any of them nor can you nor can these professional healers that are going all over the country getting rich at the expense of poor people. It's a shame; it's a terrible, terrible, shame.

But the early apostles had these gifts and powers as credentials; they had them assigned. If you read the book of **Hebrews**, these apostles, the ability to preach in another language and the ability to heal the sick and raise the dead were gifts given to the apostles because they didn't have the completed Word of God.

All they had was the Old Testament. They didn't have the book of Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and 1 and 2 Thessalonians. These Books were written by these men.

Now, you and I; the only proof I need that I'm preaching the Word of God is to preach the Word of God. The only proof I need that I'm sent of God is to preach the Bible. You take the Bible and follow along. If I preach what's in the God's Book then God sent me. If I don't preach what's in the Bible it's because there is no life in me.

I don't have to prove to you that I'm sent of God by healing somebody who has a crippling disease. I don't have to prove to you that I am a minister of God by causing somebody who is hard of hearing to be able to hear me speak when I yell in their ear.

No, I don't have to prove that; the Bible is the only proof we need that God sent us. And it's a shame that men and women are being deceived by this type of evil. But, we are not like the apostle Paul in that respect. There are gifts of ministering the Word, of prayer and of faith. And God may reinstate these things in the church.

There may be in the last days some men who have the power to preach the Gospel in other languages but you will be able to understand them. There may be in the last day men who go forth with the power to heal and God speak one more time in that way as proof.

But that won't be the end of their ministry; that won't be the motive of their ministry. That won't be the goal just to heal a few sick bodies. The goal and end of their ministry will be to glorify God, to preach Jesus Christ, to bring men to salvation, to faith in Christ.

That's the end and goal of our ministry, not to call attention to ourselves, not to trade in our small houses for big houses and our small airplanes for big airplanes, and our small church buildings for big Cathedrals, and our small class rings for diamond rings, and our small wardrobes for bigger wardrobes and a larger following and a brass band to go along with us and make a lot of noise. That's not the goal of our ministry, *"it's to preach Christ and him crucified."*

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And then, I cannot be like the apostle Paul in that I can't write Holy Scriptures. The apostle Paul is the author of about 14 books in the New Testament and I can't write Holy Scriptures. I am not inspired, verbally inspired, divinely inspired by the Holy Spirit to write Scriptures.

But, I will tell you what I can do; I can be like Paul in the sense that he was a man of one message, one message; he said: *"I am determined to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified. I am determined."*

And then he said: *"We preach Christ and him crucified."* He said, *"God sent me not to baptize, (to organize, to entertain) he sent me to preach the Gospel."*

Now, I want you to listen to me a little bit this morning. I want to talk in language you can understand and I want to talk in language that is applicable to this day!

I do not believe that we are preaching Christ and Him crucified when we do nothing but give our congregation lectures on politics, good government, philosophy, and the history of religion every Lord's Day. That's not preaching Christ and Him crucified.

I don't believe we are preaching Christ and Him crucified when all we do is set forth a standard of good works, laws, morality, and encourage men to live right. That's not preaching Christ and Him crucified.

I don't believe it's preaching Christ and Him crucified when we spend our time promoting our organizations, promoting our denominations, promoting our congregations, and continually bragging on what we've done for God and what we intend to do for God in the future. That's not preaching Christ and Him crucified.

I don't believe it's preaching Christ and Him crucified to take our time in the pulpit, on the television and the radio, to sell books and tracks and papers and programs, lapel pins, and religious trinkets to raise money for our particular organization. That's not preaching Christ and Him crucified.

I don't believe it's preaching Christ and Him crucified to talk about the helplessness of God and the frustrations of God, and the disappointments of Jesus Christ, and to insist upon the fact that God wants to do something that men won't let Him do. That's not preaching Christ and Him crucified.

I heard a preacher say one time: "God has no feet but your feet, God has no eyes but your eyes, and God has no hands but your hands." Well, where was God before I was made? How did God speak, how did God see, how did God hear, and how did God walk among the trees in the Garden before I was ever created?

I don't believe that preaching Christ and Him crucified is a compromise. Oh, that's a terrible word isn't it, compromise out of fear and ambition. Compromising the strong doctrines of God's Word and preaching a religion that embraces every heresy, every false doctrine, and every

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tradition known to man in order to get along with people? Paul said: *“If I please men I’m not the servant of Christ.”*

And then, I don’t believe it’s preaching Christ and Him crucified to entertain sinners with beautiful music, lovely costumes, flashing lights, famous celebrities who know nothing about the cost of discipleship, who know nothing of the cost of preaching the Gospel, who know nothing of the persecution and mocking that comes upon all who would live godly in Christ Jesus.

That’s not preaching Christ and Him crucified. To spend our time lecturing on prophecy and what’s going to take place in the future and the second coming and speculating about these things, that’s not preaching Christ and Him crucified.

“Well, Brother Mahan; what is it to preach Christ and him crucified?” Well, will you listen to me? And we are in days where somebody’s going to have to listen to somebody. We are going to have to find out who’s speaking for God, not for himself, not for his organization, and not promoting a thing that’s got so big that he can’t quit promoting it or it will fall apart.

We’ve created some religious monsters that are so huge and so expensive and so involved that if we let them go they’ll devour us; they will kill every one of us, they will take us down with them as they go and men know that. Oh, that the pulpits would be full from men who are free from the shackles of all these entanglements.

What is it to preach Christ and Him crucified?

**First of all:** It is to preach the glory of His person; who is Jesus Christ?

Well, Thomas answered that. Thomas fell at His feet and said: *“My Lord and my God.”* Jesus Christ is none other than the Lord God in person. *“God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself,”* God with us, Immanuel; that’s His name.

The apostle Peter declared: *“Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.”* The angels said, *“Fear not Joseph to take unto thee Mary to be thy wife.”*

*“That Holy thing, (there’s no word to describe God in human nature; there is no way to describe God and man in one except) that Holy thing which is conceived in her is conceived of God. Thou shalt call his name Jesus for he shall save his people from their sins.”*

Who is He? Well, let the Father speak: *“This is my beloved Son in whom I’m well pleased. This is my beloved son; you listen to him.”*

Let the demons say something. When our Lord came upon the man possessed of devils, these devils cried out and they said: *“We know who you are. You are the Holy one of God. Have you come to torment us before our time?”*

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*“It’s not time for judgment yet, it’s not time for condemnation yet and you’ve come to torment us before our time? We know who you are. We have dealt with you before.”* That’s Jesus Christ they are talking about.

He said: *“I and my Father are one.”* The apostle Paul said, “He’s the sole expression of the glory of God. He’s the very image of God’s person and nature.”

My friend; we do not preach Christ and Him crucified unless we preach who He is, what He did, why He did it, and where He is now, for the sole efficacy of His work, of His person and work, the efficacy of His redemptive work, depends upon who He is.

Now, my friend, it’s not just death on Calvary that saves us; it’s who died on Calvary. Paul emphasizes this well when he says: *“Who is he that condemneth; it is Christ that died.”* That’s who died. Go to Calvary; that’s not a reformer, that’s not a martyr, that’s not just a messenger; that’s God incarnate on that cross.

Who is this baby in Mary’s womb? He’s the Son of God. Who is this infant in Bethlehem’s manger? He’s none other than the *“Ancient of days”* clothed in human flesh.

Who is this carpenter in Nazareth, the carpenter shop? That’s the one who made the world with His hands and spoke them into being by His Word out of nothing.

Who is this man of Galilee, who is this healer of diseases? Who is this man called Jesus? He’s the Son of God. And who is this one on Calvary’s cross; that’s the Lord Jesus Christ: *“God in Christ reconciling the world unto himself.”*

It’s not just the blood on the cross that saves, it’s whose bloods on that cross and it’s who died, who shed His blood. *“Who is he that condemneth; it’s Christ that died?”*

It’s not just that we have a high priest; any high priest won’t do. It’s got to be the one, the only living, eternal priest, *“after the order of Melchisedek, who has no beginning or ending, no mother or father, the ancient of days.”* That’s our High Priest, Christ the Lord.

So, if we preach Christ and Him crucified, we’ve got to preach who He is. That’s our only hope.

**Secondly:** To preach Christ and Him crucified is to preach not only the glory of His person but the excellency of His person!

He knew no sin, He had no sin, and He committed no sin, not in word, thought, imagination, or deed. Our Redeemer was without sin. This is so important. He didn’t partake of the nature of Adam’s sin in that He was not born of man.

That’s the reason the virgin birth is absolutely necessary. I hear preachers displaying their total ignorance by saying that the virgin birth is not necessary. Wait a minute! *“That which is born of the flesh is flesh.”*

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And if Jesus Christ was born of a natural father, He's no different from you. He's got a wicked heart, a wicked mind, and a wicked soul. He's born in sin. He's born separated from God. He was born dead in sin. *"He's shapen in iniquity and brought forth speaking lies estranged from the womb."*

But Jesus Christ, you see, had no earthly father; He's the seed of woman, and you are the seed of man. Christ was born without a human father; therefore, He did not partake of the nature of Adam at all, the sin of Adam: *"He knew no sin."*

Now Abraham was the friend of God but he wasn't without sin. Moses was the meekest of all men but he wasn't without sin. David was a man after God's own heart but he was not without sin.

John the Baptist was the greatest man born of woman but he was not without sin. Mary, don't let me offend you here, now, but this is the truth; Mary was the instrument God used to bear Christ Jesus into the world but she was not without sin.

She said one time: *"My soul rejoiceth in God my Saviour."* She had a human father. She was not immaculately conceived, not at all; that's a lie and there's not a word of truth in it. Mary had a father and a mother. She was born in sin. She was a highly favored vessel, one that God used.

Paul was the greatest apostle but he was not without sin. But Jesus Christ had no sin. He was immaculately conceived by the Holy Spirit in the virgin's womb and he is perfectly righteous.

And the obedience of Christ before the holy law of God is that righteousness imputed to every believer. Listen to **Romans 5:19**: *"By the disobedience of one, that's Adam, we were made sinners. By the obedience of Christ we were made holy, made righteous."*

Adam represented us in the Garden and in the fall and we were in him. Christ represented us on the earth in the righteousness of God's redemption and we are regarded in Him and received in Him, accepted in Him, cleansed in Him, *"and accepted in the beloved."*

Do you see that? *"In Adam we die; in Christ we are made alive. As we borne the image of the earthy, Adam, the first Adam; we will bear the image of the heavenly, the second Adam, who is the Lord from heaven."*

To preach Christ and Him crucified, we preach the glory of His person, and the excellency of His character.

**Thirdly:** We preach the power of his blood!

I love this verse of Scripture: *"The blood of Jesus Christ God's Son cleanseth us from all sin."*

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Yes sir; I'm one of those preachers who believe there's power in the blood. I'm one of those preachers who believe that there is no sin so great, there's no transgression so vial, there's no guilt so black, no life so wicked, no heart so evil, and no mind so depraved that the blood of Jesus Christ cannot make it as white as snow. He said that, "*Though your sins be as scarlet; I'll make them white as snow.*"

You are sitting there listening to me and your sins are before you aren't they? You are thinking about them and you are going over your life. You are thinking about the lies, the adultery, the covetousness, the exaggerations, the blasphemies, the evil imaginations, and all of these things, and all that you've done.

Maybe murder; maybe you are a thief and maybe you are a blasphemer. Let me tell you something, "*The blood of Jesus Christ God's son cleanseth us from all sin.*"

I had a man sit in my study 20 some odd years ago who had just gotten out of jail. He murdered his wife and unborn child. He served time in the penitentiary. He was listening to me on the radio and He came out and sat in my study.

His piercing eyes looked me straight in the face one day and he asked this question: "Preacher; do you believe God can forgive a man for murdering his wife and baby?" I said: "Yes sir; there's no sin so great, there's no guilt so black, there's no transgression so vile, there's no act so depraved that the blood of Jesus Christ God's son cannot make it as white as snow. I believe that.

**"My sins Oh the bliss  
Of that glorious thought  
My sins, not in part  
But the whole.**

**Are nailed to the cross  
And I bear them no more  
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord  
Oh my soul."**

Somebody wrote one time and I learned this when I was just a boy:

**"Oh I wish there was some wonderful place  
Called the Land of Beginning again  
Where all our heartaches and all our poor, selfish, grief  
Could be dropped like a shabby old cloak at the door  
And never put on again."**

Well, there is; there is such a place; it's at Calvary's cross "*where the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin.*"



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If we preach Christ and Him crucified; we preach the glory of His person, the excellency of His character, and the power of His blood to cleanse the drunk, the dope-addict, the murderer, the blasphemer, the harlot, and the thief.

I don't care what you've done. I don't care who you are. I don't care the depths of sin to which you have plunged; my Lord's able. The preacher can't do it, the church can't do it, the law can't do it, baptism can't do it, and you can't do it.

Turning over a new leaf won't make it but if you by faith can get to Christ, if you can lay hold upon him like the woman with the issue of blood, like Zacchaeus of old, like Mary Magdalene, like the thief on the cross falling at His feet as a wretched, depraved, beggar, and say: "*Lord, if you will; you can make me whole.*" Old blind Bartimaeus said "*that I might see.*"

**Fourthly:** And then to preach Christ and Him crucified is to preach the power of His intercession.

Now let me tell you something; I said something a moment ago; I said we preach who He is, what He did, (He obeyed the law and died in our stead), and why He did it; "*that God might be just and justify the ungodly,*" that God's hands might be released to give mercy to guilty sinners.

Then I said this; where He is now; where is Jesus Christ? Well, I know where Buddha is; he's in the grave. I know where Mohammad is; he's in the grave. I know where Confucius is; he's in the grave.

But when they came to the grave of Christ on that resurrection morning the angels of God who announced His birth, who announced His second coming, and announced His resurrection; they stood there at that open tomb and they said; "*He's not here; he's risen. Why do you seek the living among the dead?*"

Well, He's risen and ascended, where is He? "*He's at the right hand of the majesty on high.*" The right hand of God signifies the hand of acceptance, the hand of love, and the hand of power. Being at the right hand of God our Lord prays for His own.

Now listen to this verse of Scripture in **Romans 8:34:** "*Who is he that condemneth?*" Now, Paul is challenging heaven, earth, and hell. Who in the whole universe can condemn me? Paul, why are you so confident, why are you so bold? How can you dare challenge heaven, earth, and hell? Who can condemn me?

Is it because you are a preacher, because you are religious, because you are a moral man? No sir! He gives the answer; "*Who is he that condemneth; Christ died, yea rather, (more than that) he's risen again; (then he climbs another step), who is even at the right hand of God who also, (in addition to all that), makes intercession for us.*"

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He prays for us, pleads for us, and calls our name. His blood is our atonement, His life is our righteousness. His intercession is our acceptance.

**Fifthly:** Then, to preach Christ and Him crucified is to preach His second coming!

He said: *“I will come again. I go to prepare a place for you and if I go and prepare a place for you; I will come again and receive you unto myself that where I am there you may be also.”*

It's not over yet. He's coming back, and His reward is with Him. John closed the Book with, *“Even so come Lord Jesus!”*