

**Subject: *Why We Preach the Cross***

**Scripture: *1 Corinthians 1:18-25***

In churches all over the world sermons are being preached and heard today. In some cases the truth of God's Word will be preached. Sadly in some cases everything except God's Word will be preached.

In our text Paul referred to the preaching of the cross (vs. 18). He said "we preach Christ crucified" (vs. 23). The thrust of Paul's preaching was Christ crucified on the cross for our sins. That's not all we preach, but it is at the heart of all we preach.

In Paul's ministry we see him preaching the Gospel and no matter where he went or what crowd he spoke to, he didn't change the message to suit the audience. He expected the message to change the audience. He preached the same Gospel everywhere and to everyone.

We preach the Gospel to some people who don't believe it, and we preach to some who do believe it. The same was true of Paul and the apostles of the New Testament and all the preachers since that time. Look at ***1 Corinthians 15:1-4***. In chapter 15 Paul stresses the resurrection, and in chapter 1 he stresses the crucifixion. Both are important to the Gospel.

**1. We preach the cross because *it is the power of God* (vs. 18)**

There are many false gospels, but there is only one true gospel. What are some of the other so-called gospels that a person is likely to hear?

- *The superficial gospel* – says that man doesn't need a birth from above, but a boost from below. People need a better life instead of a new heart. The worst form of badness is human goodness when it is a substitute for the new birth.
- *The social gospel* – says that people mainly need help with their physical problems; it is enough to feed the hungry and help the needy. The problem is that people need more than soup and soap; they need salvation. The social gospel is a perversion of the true Gospel because it deals only with the problem of suffering and not with the greater problem of sin.
- *The success gospel* – says that the purpose of Christ is to make life better; every believer should be healthy & wealthy; this is the gospel of name it and claim it theology.
- *The synthetic gospel* – a mixture of law and grace; trust Christ and do your best; obey the golden rule and the ten commandments; in some cases the gospel of Christ is mixed with the teachings of cult leaders or other religions; the teaching of the Roman Catholic church is a synthetic gospel (Christ and the sacraments of the church; the Bible and church tradition)
- *The seeker-sensitive gospel* – tells people what they want to hear and gives them what they want instead of what they need; doesn't mention sin or judgment or hell because that turns people off; this false teaching is based on a misunderstanding of what Paul said in ***1 Corinthians 9:20-22*** *And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that*

*are under the law; To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. Paul doesn't say "I have made the Gospel to be all things to all people." He doesn't say "I have made the church to be all things to all people." Paul is not talking about the message, but the methods of evangelism.*

- *The self-help gospel* – some teach that Christ gets you off to a good start, but you can lose your salvation if you're not careful; it is based on a wrong idea of sin, the work of Christ, and the nature of salvation

None of these false gospels has any saving power because they don't contain the truth about Christ and His death and resurrection.

**Romans 1:16** *For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.*

In our text Paul says the preaching of the cross is received in two different ways (vs. 18). To those who perish, the Gospel is foolish. But to those who are saved, the Gospel is the power of God. There are two groups: those who are (lit.) perishing, and those who are being saved.

- A. *The cross is the power of God in justification*
- B. *The cross is the power of God in sanctification*

## **2. We preach the cross because it is the wisdom of God (vs. 19-25)**

- A. *The cross confirms the wisdom of OT Scripture*
- B. *The cross surpasses human wisdom*
- C. *The cross accomplishes God's purpose*

The cross pleases God.

**Isaiah 53:10** *Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.*

God uses the message of the cross to call His people to salvation. This is God's effectual call.

**John 10:27** *My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.*

God calls us through preaching of the truth.

**Romans 10:17** *So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*