

I Corinthians 9 - Preaching – part 2

I Corinthians 2:1-5

There was a beautiful chapel in a small English village with ivy growing on the walls. On the archway over the front door it had inscribed in stone “We Preach Christ Crucified”. For a generation, faithful men did just that and those people were a light to their community and world. But times changed and the Ivy grew and blocked part of the statement on the arch so that all you could read was, “We Preach Christ”. Other men came but they were not like the faithful men that had come before. These men only preached Christ.

They preached Christ the Example and Christ the Humanitarian and Christ the Miracle worker and Christ the Great Teacher and Christ the Enlightened one.

You know these men at least by name: Mohammed, Joseph Smith (Mormons), Brigham Young, Charles Taze Russell (JWs), and any of growing list of those who love to preach anything about Christ except His sacrificial death

Years have and past and the ivy is still growing. Now, no longer can you read “We preach Christ” but only “We Preach” ...and they did: economics, politics, social justice, saving the planet.

--It seems the ivy is growing a lot in our evangelical circles and the temptation to shave off part of our message increases.

What is preaching?

1. Preaching the Word hard because the world, the flesh and the devil keep trying to lead us off our message.
2. Preaching the Word transforms us –Colossians 1:13; how did He do that? Romans 10:14
3. Preaching the Word starts and finishes us: Acts 20:32

1. The Apostle Paul has two farewells written in Scripture: one we just saw in the verse above, and the other is in his last recorded words in II Timothy.

--II Timothy 3:16-17

--“All Scripture is God breathed” nothing else is.

--It is living and active Hebrews 4:12 – nothing else is.

--Why would we want to come together and hear anything else?

--We can go many places and hear people’s opinions about all that’s going on—opinions on politics, the war, immigration, bills being passed.

You are welcome to hear those things but let me warn you, none of it is completely true.

--I have an opinion and you have a opinion on most of these things but neither opinion is completely true.

--Do you remember the rule on taking True/False tests? if any part is false, the entire thing is false.

--That’s is what you get when you hear all that is being put out: parts are true but never is all of it true even with those who tell it have no other intention but to tell the truth.

--Nobody has the whole picture, nobody has a full perspective, so, nobody has the whole truth.

--Even with the best intentions, we get half-truths because nobody has a full orbbed perspective.

Where can we go where the perspective is full orbbed? Where there nothing but truth with no mixture of error? Only where God is breathing the words!

--The Word of God is our starting place: V. 15

--The Word of God is our finishing place: VV. 16-17

--For those reasons, we don’t waste our time on anything else.

--Why would you want to come together to hear my or anyone else’s opinions? Paul puts the punctuation on that question as we continue reading in II Timothy 4.

II Timothy 4:1-4

--VV. 1-2a -- It is hard to imagine how Paul could have said this in a more serious tone!

--"in the presence of God and Christ Jesus" – They stand as observers of our receiving of this charge.

--You do not get a statement like this anywhere else about anything else that the church does or is supposed to do.

This must be where the danger and the greatest temptation is.

--"preach the Word" – Nothing else; not preach about the Word; not preach something related to the Word—only the word.

--I Timothy 4:13 – We don't do other stuff; we don't spend our time together on other things.

--Our goal when we come together ultimately is to read the Bible, explain the Bible and apply the Bible to our lives.

--I Corinthians 2:1 – the Word of God and preaching of the Word of God is where the power is.

And we do this at all times: in and out of season V. 2

--When people agree and when they don't agree; when it's popular and when it's not popular.

People are starving for this: Matthew 4:4 quoting from Deuteronomy 8:3 We are starving for it, but we didn't know it until we heard it.

--People are so sick that they don't understand their need.

Pica is a mental health condition where a person compulsively swallows non-food items. They eat everything from dirt to paint to poison and they do it compulsively. In one person's stomach was found 1,446 items, including "457 nails, 42 screws, safety pins, spoon tops, and salt and pepper shaker tops".

--We can't wait until people ask for the Word, we have to feed it to them despite what they are asking for.

--You don't wait until your kids stop asking for candy to feed them good food, do you?

--People today are full up but they're starving—why would we feed them anything that's not nutritious?

A cover story for The Economist, an international magazine, was entitled "Yes, I'd lie to you: The post-truth world." The article analyzed the dishonesty that's wreaking havoc in politics, journalism, social media, and many other areas of our common life. One expert quoted in the article said, "Right now, it pays to be outrageous, but not to be truthful." The article also highlighted one of the most effective ways to tell lies—by hiding the truth in a glut of information. "'Information glut is the new censorship,' says Zeynep Tufekci of the University of North Carolina, adding that other governments are now employing similar tactics. China's authorities, for instance, do not try to censor everything they do not like on social media, but often flood the networks with distracting information."

VV. 3-4 Myths sell! --people will ingest the worst stuff.

--The demand creates the supply.

V. 5 – In a world full of those intoxicated with meaningless information, its our job to be sober; in world full of malnutrition its our jobs to feed them what they are really starving for; in world full of lies we hold out only the truth.

Imagine picking your car up from the shop after a routine tune-up, and the technician says, "This car is in great shape. Clearly you have an automotive genius to take great care of your car." Later that day, your brakes don't work. You find out you were out of brake fluid. You could have died.

You go back to the shop, and you say, "Why didn't you tell me?" The technician replies, "Well, I didn't want you to feel bad. Plus, to be honest, I was afraid you might get upset with me. I want

this to be a safe place where you feel loved and accepted." You'd be furious! You'd say, "I didn't come here for a little fantasy-based ego boost! When it comes to my car, I want the truth." Or imagine going to the doctor's office for a check-up. The doctor says to you, "You are a magnificent physical specimen. You have the body of an Olympian. You are to be congratulated." Later that day while climbing the stairs, your heart gives out. You find out later your arteries were so clogged that you were, like, one jelly doughnut away from the grim reaper. You go back to the doctor and say, "Why didn't you tell me?" The doctor says, "Well, I knew your body is in worse shape than the Pillsbury doughboy, but if I tell people stuff like that, they get offended. It's bad for business. They don't come back. I want this to be a safe place where you feel loved and accepted." You'd be furious! You'd say to the doctor, "When it comes to my body, I want the truth!" Obviously, when something matters to us, we do not want illusory comfort based on pain avoidance. We want truth.