

# We Preach... Christ Jesus

2 Corinthians 4.5: For it is Christ Jesus as Lord whom we preach, not ourselves; we are your servants for Jesus' sake.  
1 Corinthians 1.23: But all we preach is Christ crucified—a stumbling-block to the Jews and sheer nonsense to the Gentiles. (Phillips)

Throughout the NT there are four major themes to the preaching of the Apostles:

- The Problem of Sin (Acts 13.38, 1 Corinthians 15.1-3)
- The Person of Christ (Acts 5.42, 17.18)
- The Provision of God (1 Corinthians 1.23, 15.1-3, Acts 17.18)
- The Promise for Believers (Ephesians 2.17, Colossians 1.5, 23).

## The Problem of Sin

Sin originated with Satan (Isaiah 14.12-14) and began on earth with man when Satan tempted Eve (Genesis 3.1). Adam and Eve sinned because they disobeyed God and rebelled against His commandment. Adam and Eve became sinners by sinning. We have sinned because we are sinners. Adam's fallen nature has passed to all mankind, so that all are born in sin (John 3.6, Ephesians 2.3, Romans 5.12, 19, Psalm 51.5, Job 14.4).

There are many words the Bible employs to describe the terrible nature of sin. Some of the principal words are:

- *hamartia* (266) - the general term for sin, meaning 'to miss the mark'. Used of **Adam** in Romans 5.12.
- *parakoe* (3876) - failing to hear when God speaks, or hearing carelessly and inattentively. Used of **Adam** in Romans 5.19.
- *parabasis* (3847) - transgression, the breaking of a recognised limit or boundary. Used of **Adam** in Romans 5.14 and **Eve** in 1 Timothy 2.14.
- *paraptoma* (3900) - a false step, a mistake in judgement, an unintentional error, being caught off guard (in relation to the "works of the flesh", Galatians 6.1), a 'falling beside' rather than 'falling short' (*hamartia*). Used of **Adam** in Romans 5.15-20.
- *anomia* (458) - lawlessness, a violation of the law of God which is written on our hearts (Romans 2.14-15).

The revelation of the righteousness of God is written on the hearts of all (Romans 2.15). As such it can be most helpful to challenge the lost in relation to the Ten Commandments. The **law** causes sin to spring alive (Romans 7.9) and appear greater in our lives (Romans 5.20). Our lives should be lived for the glory of God, our Creator. Anything short of this is sin (Romans 3.23). There can be no doubt, none can reach this standard. **ALL have sinned** (Romans 6.23).

Our sins have **consequences**. Every sin is rebellion against God and His revealed standard (Psalm 51.4). God had told Adam that the day he broke His commandment he would die, literally 'in dying thou shalt die' (Genesis 2.17). So, when Adam sinned he died spiritually, i.e. he was cast out of God's presence (Genesis 3.23-24). Later he died physically (Genesis 5.5). We are all spiritually dead and therefore will die physically (Ephesians 2.1, Colossians 2.13).

Sin produces three things: **guilt** (Romans 3.19), **defilement** (Isaiah 64.6) and **separation** (Isaiah 59.2). To die physically without knowing sins forgiven is to remain in this state for eternity.

After death comes **judgment** (Hebrews 9.27). Those that are lost will be resurrected to the Great White Throne where their lives will be judged (Revelation 20.11-15). God will review their actions (Ecclesiastes 12.14), their words (Matthew 12.36) and their thoughts (Ezekiel 18.4). The final verdict will be given (Matthew 7.23, Revelation 20.15) and the lost will face eternity separated from a God of light, love and life, forever confronted by their own filthiness (Revelation 22.11). Hell is *awaiting sentence*, the Great White Throne is *passing sentence* and the Lake of Fire is the *death sentence*.

## The Person of Christ

The Apostles preached Jesus Christ (the Man down here who was once in heaven) and Christ Jesus (the Man who is in heaven and was once down here). They preached concerning His life, glory, majesty and unsearchable riches.

To deal with the problem of our sins, Christ must be both God and Man. **Only as God** is He capable of paying the full penalty for sin and satisfying the righteous demands of a holy God. Only God could defeat the mighty power of Satan as the "stronger" Man (Luke 11.20-21) and live a life that was perfect in action, word and thought (2 Peter 1.17). Christ

"did no sin" (1 Peter 2.22), "knew no sin" (2 Corinthians 5.21) and in Him "is no sin" (1 John 3.5). He could not and cannot sin.

The virgin birth is most important in this regard. The Scripture speaks of Holy Spirit conception (Matthew 1.20) and power protection (Luke 1.35) to emphasise the fact that although He is fully Man (Hebrews 2.14), nothing of man's fallen nature or sin tainted Him. He is "that holy thing which shall be born" (Luke 1.35); He is Holy Humanity.

**Only as Man** is He capable of dying (Hebrews 2). Only as Man can He be a "merciful and faithful" High Priest able to "make reconciliation" for our sins. Only as Man could He be called the Son of David (heir to the throne) and the Son of Abraham (heir to the land). He will one day return to take His rightful place as King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

### The Provision of God

Although the Apostles preached the Person of Christ, the emphasis was always on His death (1 Corinthians 15.1-3), cross (1 Corinthians 1.23), and resurrection (Acts 17.18) rather than His life. The sinless life of Christ alone could not save us.

God is not just a God of love. He is also holy, righteous and just (Leviticus 11.44). For God to forgive sins, its penalty **must** be paid. To ignore sins or forgive them without the payment of the required penalty would be unjust. Not to punish sins would be to condone them!

The penalty of sin is death (Genesis 2.16-17, Romans 6.23). Since the life of the flesh is in the blood (Leviticus 17.11), the shedding of **blood** speaks of death. Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness (Hebrews 9.22). The full penalty for sin (ransom) could only be paid by Christ (Psalm 49.6-8), One who in Himself is sinless and could offer a sacrifice of infinite value and worth. He shed His precious blood (1 Peter 1.19) and died. He was made sin for us (2 Corinthians 5.21). As a result **propitiation** has been made (1 John 2.2). A holy God is forever satisfied and is now able to reach out to all lost sinners in grace and mercy. Salvation is freely available to ALL (Romans 10.13, 1 Timothy 2.6).

We can be sure that God's justice has been satisfied because Christ rose from the dead. The **resurrection** was the seal of approval on His finished work. He has demonstrated His victory over sin, the grave and death (1 Corinthians 15). The resurrection also proved Christ to be the Son of God (Romans 1.4), fulfilled Scripture (John 10.18) and secures our life and future physical resurrection (1 Corinthians 15.20).

A full and free salvation is now available to all, but effective **ONLY** for those who believe (Romans 3.22). The Word of God teaches repentance towards God (Acts 11.18, 17.30, 20.21, 26.19-20) and faith in the Lord Jesus (Acts 16.31, Romans 5.1). Faith (or belief) and repentance go hand in hand. Exercising true faith in Christ must include repentance. **Repentance** is 'a change of mind or attitude' towards self, sin and God. Lost sinners must come to a recognition of their true condition in the sight of God.

**Faith** is not believing something to be true. The demons believe in God and shudder with terror (James 2.19). In the NT faith appears to have these elements: **conviction** of the truth of God's word (Romans 10.17) and **confidence** in Christ and His saving work (Galatians 2.16, 20). This *attitude* of faith will be demonstrated in our **conduct** (2 Corinthians 5.7). Faith does not save us; we can't boast in our faith. We are saved by grace **through** faith. It is God's grace that has saved us; faith is merely the channel by which we receive this grace (Romans 4.16, Ephesians 2.8-9).

### The Promise for Believers

The moment we exercised faith in Christ we were given every spiritual blessing in Him (Ephesians 1.3); we are heirs with Him (Romans 8.17). The Apostles also preached the blessings that all believers share (Ephesians 2.17, Colossians 1.5).

Many of the blessings found in Christ can also be seen in tracing what His shed blood and death have accomplished for us. His **shed blood** has paid our ransom price (Acts 20.28) and accomplished: propitiation (Romans 3.25), justification (Romans 5.9), fellowship (1 Corinthians 10.16), redemption (1 Peter 1.19), forgiveness of sins (Ephesians 1.7), peace (Colossians 1.20), the purification of our consciences (Hebrews 9.14), an entrance into the holiest (Ephesians 2.13, Hebrews 10.19), sanctification (Hebrews 13.12), the establishment of a new covenant (Hebrews 13.20) and cleansing (1 John 1.7, Revelation 1.5).

Note the distinction with His **death**. This has accomplished *my* death and release from the power of sin (Romans 6.1-11), the power of the law (Romans 7.1-6, Galatians 2.19) and the present evil world (Galatians 1.4) as well as my reconciliation to God (Romans 5.10, Colossians 1.21-22). ***His shed blood deals with my sins (what I've done); His death deals with my sin (what I am)!***