

6. THE PRIMARY ROLE OF PREACHING THE GOSPEL: 1 Corinthians 1:14-17

by Brett Baggett on Sunday, August 8th, 2021

INTRO: What is the primary mission of a servant of Christ?

BIG IDEA: The primary mission of a servant of Christ is to preach the gospel and to preach it plainly.

I. THE PRIMARY MISSION OF A SERVANT OF CHRIST IS *NOT* TO BAPTIZE (vv. 14-17a)

1 Corinthians 1:14-17a “14 I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, 15 so that no one may say that you were baptized in my name. 16 (I did baptize also the household of Stephanas. Beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized anyone else.) 17a For Christ did not send me to baptize...”

- **Christ has not sent his servants primarily to baptize;** to teach the commands of God written in the Law; to feed the hungry; or to care for the needy!

II. THE PRIMARY MISSION OF A SERVANT OF CHRIST IS *TO* PREACH THE GOSPEL (v. 17a)

1 Corinthians 1:17a “For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel,”

- **The primary mission of a servant of Christ is to preach the gospel!** All the rest is subordinate to this, flowing out of this primary role.
- **Listen to what Jesus told Paul initially: Acts 26:17-18** “17 ‘I am sending you 18 to open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.’”
- **Q.** How does that happen? **A.** Through the preaching of the gospel! *NOW CONSIDER WITH ME THESE 7 REASONS PREACHING THE GOSPEL IS PRIMARY*

I) The preaching of the gospel is primary because it is the only way sinners can know how to be forgiven of their sins!

- **Ephesians 1:7** “In [Christ] we have redemption *through his blood*, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace,”

Q. Have you repented of your sin and put your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ? **A.** If not, do it now! If so, the guilt of your sins is washed away.

II) The preaching of the gospel is primary because it is the primary way saints are strengthened to keep killing their still indwelling sin and therefore grow in holiness!

- **Colossians 3:3-5** “3 For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. 5 Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.”

III) The preaching of the gospel is primary because believers need to be constantly reminded of their position in Christ!

- **Romans 8:1** “There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”

IV) The preaching of the gospel is primary because it is the only way saints can adequately put to death their worries and anxieties!

- **1 Peter 5:7** “[cast] all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.” **Q.** How do I know that He cares for me? **A.** Romans 8:32.
- **Romans 8:32** “He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?”

V) The preaching of the gospel is primary because it reminds suffering saints of the eternal weight of glory that they will experience one day with Christ!

- **Romans 8:18** “For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.”

VI) The preaching of the gospel is primary because it assures those who submit to and trust in Christ Jesus of God’s love for them!

- **1 John 4:10** “In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.”
- **Romans 8:35-39** “35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? 36 As it is written, “For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.” 37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. 38 For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

VII) The preaching of the gospel is primary because it the chief way that God stirs up praise in His people!

- **Hebrews 13:14-15** “14 For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city that is to come. 15 Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name.”
- **BOYS AND GIRLS, I BEG YOU TO LISTEN TO ME ALONG WITH THE ADULTS:**
- **What good is BAPTISM without the preaching of the gospel?** It is simply getting wet!
- **What good is teaching THE LAW without the preaching of the gospel?** It is simply showing people a mirror that exposes their filth, without provided the soap to wash themselves clean; this, at best, makes them self-righteous moralists whose pride is in an ivory tower, at worst this crushes their spirits into the mud.
- **What good is FEEDING THE POOR without the preaching of the gospel?** It is but sending sinners to hell with full bellies, or saints to heaven with empty souls.
- **What good is HELPING THE NEEDY without the preaching of the gospel?** It is but dealing with temporary needs and ignoring the eternal.

This is why Paul will shortly write in 1 Cor. 2:2, “I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.”

- **We need men like this today;** men who could care less how many people they have personally baptized. We need men who would rather die than stop preaching the gospel, as well as the whole counsel of God; men who love Christ more than vainglory and notches on their belt. We need men who will lift up their voice like a trumpet and declare Christ crucified, raised, and returning; men who, after they preach, go home and have their hearers forget who they are because they are cherishing Christ!

Q. Do you want to be a faithful servant of Christ? The primary mission of a faithful servant is to proclaim the gospel!

III. HOW MUST A FAITHFUL SERVANT PREACH THE GOSPEL? (v. 17b)

1 Corinthians 1:17b “and not with words of eloquent wisdom,”

- **Through the remainder of chapter one, all the way to the end of chapter 2, Paul keeps beating this same drum**—rejecting the wisdom of the world, rejecting worldly philosophy, and defending why he preaches the plain gospel—the good news of Christ crucified!
- **I) A faithful servant of Christ must preach the gospel based on what God says in His word,** not philosophy or human wisdom!
- **1 Corinthians 1:21** “For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom (*worldly wisdom*), it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe.”
- **II) A faithful servant of Christ must preach the gospel plainly and simply!**
- **2 Corinthians 4:2a** “we have renounced disgraceful, underhanded ways. We refuse to practice cunning or to tamper with God's word...”
- **III) A faithful servant of Christ must preach the gospel by the open statement of the truth!**
- **2 Corinthians 4:2b** “but by the open statement of the truth we would commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God.”
- **IV) A faithful servant of Christ must preach the gospel, trusting God to shine light in the darkened hearts of sinners!**
- **2 Corinthians 4:6** “For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.”
- **V) A faithful servant of Christ must preach the gospel, trusting God to cause the growth in both sinners for salvation and saints for sanctification!**
- **1 Corinthians 3:6-7** “6 I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. 7 So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth.”

IV. WHY MUST A SERVANT OF CHRIST PREACH THE GOSPEL PLAINLY? (v. 17c)

1 Corinthians 1:17c “lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.”

- **CHILDREN:** There is no power in Brett Baggett. There is no power in Nathan Yarbrough. There is not power in Brandon Allen. There is no power in mom or dad. **There is power in the cross of Jesus Christ.** Children, you can have your sins washed away by faith in Jesus!
- **ADULTS: Q. Where do you believe the power lies?** What do you look to for power to save sinners, sanctify saints, & comfort those suffering?
- **There is no power in programs.** There is no power in self-help seminars masquerading as preaching. There is no power in movies. There is no power in gimmicks and games. There is no power in giveaways. There is no power in emotionally manipulating someone into making a profession of faith or praying “the sinners prayer.” There is no power in Baptism. There is no power in feeding the poor. There is no power in morals. There is no power in the Law. There is no power in philosophy. There is no power in worldly wisdom.
- **God put all the power in the gospel—the message of Christ crucified for sinners, so that all who believe will be saved!** And when men clothe the gospel with these things that I have just mentioned, it empties the cross of its power!
- **When you sand down the splinters of the cross with eloquent speech, rather than leaving it rugged with plain-speech,** you are causing the gospel to slide right off people rather than stick in their souls with those blessed splinters!
- **They may say,** “Oh interesting...” **but we want them to say what the great crowd said in Acts 2:** “What must I do to be saved?”
- **When you wrap the rubber band of worldly wisdom around the message of the cross, you castrate the gospel.** If you castrate a bull, you may make one decent meal, but you will never make any more calves. If you castrate the gospel, you may make a decent speech, but you will never make nor help any Christians.
- **They may say,** “That is true” **but the desired response is** “This is life; eternal life! Praise God for Christ; He is my only hope!”
- **The plain and simple preaching of Christ crucified for sinners is like a giant magnet that God the Holy Spirit uses to draw all Christ’s people to Him! THEREFORE, HOLD FORTH THE MAGNET!**
- **Do you want God to transform sinners into saints, and make Christ’s sheep more like their great Shepherd?** Then preach the gospel plainly and simply, lest the cross be emptied of its power!