

The Gospel Unleashed ***Keeping the Focus on Jesus!*** ***1 Corinthians 2:1-2***

1 Corinthians 2:1–2 (ESV) — And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.

Paul had left Athens...

On his 65 mile journey from Athens to Corinth he realized that attempting to proclaim the gospel using man's methods was, for the most part, unfruitful...

He made the decision to pair back on the focus of the Gospel...

1. Focus on the PRIORITY of Jesus in God's GRACIOUS Plan

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It is so easy to get off on “side streets”!

Paul reminded Timothy to be careful of these things...

1 Timothy 1:5–7 (NLT) — The purpose of my instruction is that all believers would be filled with love that comes from

a pure heart, a clear conscience, and genuine faith. But some people have missed this whole point. They have turned away from these things and spend their time in meaningless discussions. They want to be known as teachers of the law of Moses, but they don't know what they are talking about, even though they speak so confidently.

We tend to MAJOR on the MINOR and MINOR on the MAJOR...

Colossians 2:8 (ESV) — 8 See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ.

Let us change to MAJOR on the MAJOR and MINOR on the MINOR...

1. Focus on the PRIORITY of Jesus in God's GRACIOUS Plan

2. Focus on the PERSON of Jesus as God's MYSTERIOUS Plan

1 Corinthians 2:2 (ESV) — For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.

Why do I say that Jesus is God's mysterious plan?

The mystery is not the need for sacrifice...

Ever since Cain and Abel, people have been recognizing the need to “offer” a sacrifice to “god or the gods”...

***The mystery is not the need for a “pure” sacrifice...
or even a human sacrifice...***

People have been offering “pure” sacrifices to gods for centuries...

- ***Babies offered to Molech***
- ***Virgin girls offered to pagan gods...***
- ***Even God had the Israelites offer a one year old lamb without defect...***

This morning in my One Year reading...

Jeremiah 19:5 (NLT) — They have built pagan shrines to Baal, and there they burn their sons as sacrifices to Baal. I have never commanded such a horrible deed; it never even crossed my mind to command such a thing!

ILLUSTRATION – In Kolkutta at the Koli Temple

- ***Outside the Temple was a man standing in an open area with a fire...***
- ***People would bring him various offerings (flowers, fruit, etc) to bless before taking them to offer before the Koli idol***
- ***While I was there some were bringing baby lambs***
- ***The priest would cut off the head and pour some of the blood into a bowl for them to pour out before Koli***

The mystery is the sacrifice being God Himself!!!

“Jesus” means “Yahweh is salvation”

His very name, given to Him by God the Father through an angel, was relayed to Joseph in a dream...

John 1:1 (ESV) — In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

John 1:14 (ESV) — And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Jesus, God’s Son, is the mystery!

1 Corinthians 2:7 (ESV) — But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glory.

Colossians 2:2b–3 (NLT) — ... I want them to have complete confidence that they understand God’s mysterious plan, which is Christ himself. In him lie hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

THIS is the problem!

1 Corinthians 1:23 (ESV) — But we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles

1. Focus on the PRIORITY of Jesus in God’s GRACIOUS Plan

2. Focus on the PERSON of Jesus as God’s MYSTERIOUS Plan

3. Focus on the PROMISE of Jesus in God’s PROPHETIC Plan

1 Corinthians 2:2 (ESV) — For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.

Since the first mention of a Redeemer in the Scriptures, the Lord had been systematically laying out His redemptive plan...

Genesis 3:15 (ESV) — I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.

A coming Messiah was known by the Jews for hundreds of years...

Hundreds of Scriptures prophesied of Messiah/Redeemer

The idea of a Redeemer was not a surprise...

Throughout history many different religions spoke of a prophet that was redeemer...

But the idea of the Prophet/Redeemer being God Himself was hard to believe, but not unplausible...

However, the idea of the Prophet/Redeemer God being the Sacrifice was unfathomable!

THIS is the problem!

1 Corinthians 1:23 (ESV) — But we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles

Yet it was clearly prophesied in Scripture!

Did you know there is a portion of Scripture that Rabbi's forbid the Jewish people from reading?

Isaiah 53:3–6 (ESV) — He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and

we esteemed him not. Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

1. Focus on the PRIORITY of Jesus in God's GRACIOUS Plan

2. Focus on the PERSON of Jesus as God's MYSTERIOUS Plan

3. Focus on the PROMISE of Jesus in God's PROPHETIC Plan

4. Focus on the PAYMENT of Jesus as God's REDEMPTIVE Plan

1 Corinthians 2:2 (ESV) — For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.

Notice the way this statement is clearly stated...

Jesus Christ and HIM crucified

Jesus did not come to offer a sacrifice!

Jesus came to become THE sacrifice!

→ John the Baptist

John 1:29 (ESV) — The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"

→ The Apostle Peter

1 Peter 1:18–19 (ESV) — Knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.

→ The Apostle Paul

1 Corinthians 5:7b (ESV) — ... For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.

Isaiah 53:6 (ESV) — All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

2 Corinthians 5:21 (ESV) — For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

God has a Plan!

→ It's a GRACIOUS Plan!

→ It's a MYSTERIOUS Plan!

→ It's a PROPHECIED Plan!

→ It's a REDEMPTIVE Plan!

1 Thessalonians 5:9–10 (NLT) — For God chose to save us through our Lord Jesus Christ, not to pour out his anger on us. Christ died for us so that, whether we are dead or alive when he returns, we can live with him forever.

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Keeping the Focus on Jesus!
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