

## TIME OF REFLECTION

“Official Christianity, of late years, has been having what is known ‘as a bad press’. We are constantly assured that the churches are empty because preachers insist too much upon doctrine — dull dogma as people call it. The fact is the precise opposite. It is the neglect of dogma that makes for dullness. The Christian faith is the most exciting drama that ever staggered the imagination of man — and the dogma is the drama.... That God should play the tyrant over man is a dismal story of unrelieved oppression; that man should play the tyrant over man is the usual dreary record of human futility; but that man should play the tyrant over God and find him a better man than himself is an astonishing drama indeed. Any journalist, hearing of it for the first time, would recognize it as news; those who did hear it for the first time actually called it news, and good news at that; though we are likely to forget that the word Gospel ever meant anything so sensational.”

~Dorothy L. Sayers (1893-1957), novelist and playwright, in “The Greatest Drama Ever Staged”

“Let us become like Christ, since Christ became like us. He assumed the worse that He might give us the better; He became poor that we through His poverty might be rich.”

~Gregory of Nazianzus (329-390), 4<sup>th</sup> century church leader and theologian

“Once, when Paul came to Athens, a mighty city, he found in the temple many ancient altars, and he went from one to the other and looked at them all, but he did not kick down a single one of them with his foot. Rather he stood up in the middle of the marketplace and said they were nothing but idolatrous things and begged the people to forsake them; yet he did not destroy one of them by force. When the Word took hold of their hearts, they forsook them of their own accord, and in consequence the thing fell of itself.... For the Word created heaven and earth and all things; the Word must do this thing, and not we poor sinners.”

~Martin Luther, at his return to Wittenberg under an Imperial death threat (March 10, 1522)

“I would propose that the subject of the ministry in this house, as long as this platform shall stand, and as long as this house shall be frequented by worshippers, shall be the person of Jesus Christ. I am never ashamed to avow myself a Calvinist; I do not hesitate to take the name of Baptist; but if I am asked what is my creed, I reply, ‘It is Jesus Christ.’ ...Christ Jesus, who is the sum and substance of the gospel, who is in himself all theology, the incarnation of every precious truth, the all-glorious personal embodiment of the way, the truth, and the life.”

~Charles Spurgeon (1834-1892), his first words at the Metropolitan Tabernacle in London

“As for me, my charter is Jesus Christ, the inviolable charter is His cross and His death and resurrection, and faith through Him.”

~Ignatius of Antioch (c. 35 - c. 107), student of John the Apostle

“...upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it.”

~Jesus in Matthew 16:18

**SERMON** – “The Centrality and Sufficiency of Christ and His Gospel” – *Pastor Don Willeman*

**SERMON PASSAGE** – *selected passages (ESV)*

*Romans 1*

<sup>16</sup>For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. <sup>17</sup>For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “But the righteous man shall live by faith.”

*1 Corinthians 1*

<sup>18</sup>For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.... <sup>22</sup>For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, <sup>23</sup>but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, <sup>24</sup>but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. <sup>25</sup>For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

*1 Corinthians 2*

<sup>1</sup>And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. <sup>2</sup>For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. <sup>3</sup>And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling, <sup>4</sup>and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, <sup>5</sup>so that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

*1 Corinthians 15*

<sup>1</sup>Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, <sup>2</sup>and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you—unless you believed in vain.

<sup>3</sup>For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, <sup>4</sup>that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, <sup>5</sup>and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. <sup>6</sup>Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep.

*Galatians 2*

<sup>20</sup>I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

*Colossians 1*

<sup>3</sup>We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, <sup>4</sup>since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints, <sup>5</sup>because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. Of this you have heard before in the word of the truth, the gospel, <sup>6</sup>which has come to you, as indeed in the whole world it is bearing fruit and increasing—as it also does among you, since the day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth.