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"I could not see for the glory of that light," testified the Apostle Paul in describing his meeting with the risen Lord on the Damascus Road. Saul of Tarsus was privileged to begin his experience with the Lord Jesus as in a blaze of glory shining from Heaven.

"And it came to pass, that as I made my journey, and was come nigh unto Damascus about noon, suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me. And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me? And I answered, Who art thou, Lord? And He said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest...And I said, What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said unto me, Arise, and go..." (Acts 22:6-10).

With such an experience, this called apostle moved on into a mighty ministry for the exaltation of Christ. This burst of heavenly light on his darkened soul could never be forgotten, as he passed out of darkness into God's marvelous light. That Face of Glory he saw on the Damascus Road could never be erased from his vision.

With the remembrance of this sight of the Lord, he exclaimed, "For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord...For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. 4:5-6).

Oh that God would give us one such look into the face of Jesus Christ! That Face of Sorrow! That Face of Serenity! That Face of Agony! That Face of Glory! One such look would transform our lives and add glory to our ministry. Well might we exclaim—

*Show me Thy face— one transient
Gleam of loveliness Divine,
And I shall never think or dream
Of other love save Thine:
All lesser light will darken quite,
All lower glories wane,
The beautiful of earth will scarce
Seem beautiful again.*

The Exaltation of Christ

This prince of preachers, the Apostle Paul, chose to preach Christ and Him crucified in the perfect light of that first revelation, so that near the end of his life of ministry, he could boldly affirm, "Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision" (Acts 26:19). Paul never compromised with the Truth; he never weighed the consequences as to whether he should preach the whole truth or only a part. Consequently, with clear conscience, he could say to the elders of the church in Ephesus, "Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men, for I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God" (Acts 20:26-27).

He had seen the Face of Jesus, and, as Dr. A. T. Robertson stated it, "That transcendent experience was the crux upon which all of Paul's testimony turned. He never doubted its reality for one moment."

Christ Fills All Scripture

Just step inside the palace of God's revelation and you will meet with the One who is "The Lion of the tribe of Judah" (Gen. 49:10); "The Angel of the Lord" (Ex. 3:2); and the prophet whom God raised up (Deut. 18:18). Then again, you will meet Him as "The Captain of the Lord's Host" (Josh. 5:14) or as "The Root and the Offspring of David, and the Bright and Morning Star" (Rev. 22:16).

As you go further you hear this word concerning Him, "Thou shalt call His name JESUS; for He shall save His people from their sins" (Matt. 1:21); and again, "they shall call His name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us" (M

att. 1:23). It is of this very One that the Holy Spirit has recorded, "In the beginning was the WORD, and the WORD was with God, and the WORD was God" (John 1:1).

As we come to this wonderful Person Himself, we hear Him say, "Come unto Me" (Matt. 11:28). "I am the living bread" to satisfy your deepest hunger (John 6:51); "I am the Light of the world: he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John 8:12); "I am the Good Shepherd" (John 10:11), to guide you to the "green pastures" and to lead you by the "still waters"; "For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10); "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me" (John 14:6).

Preaching the Person of Christ

Special grace was given, and is given, for this Christ-exalting ministry. "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ" (Eph. 3:8). So gloried the Apostle Paul. Throughout the apostolic era the same emphasis on the Person of Christ prevailed, for "They taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead"; "And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ."

As soon as Saul of Tarsus was converted "he preached Jesus in the synagogues" (Acts 4:2; 5:42; 9:20). For the overcoming of error and the intrusion of worldly wisdom, nothing can excel the exaltation of Christ. To meet such a situation, the Apostle Paul emphasized the remedy: "For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: But we preach Christ crucified...Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God" (1 Cor. 1:22-24).

Many preach anything rather than "Christ crucified," vain speculations rather than sound doctrine; sensational topics rather than sanctifying truths. Christians should take warning not only how they hear, but also who they hear.

Why Preachers Should Preach Christ

Preachers who preach not Christ to the people are guilty of deceiving and misleading the people, and face a day of reckoning before the Searcher and Judge of all preachers. We need to deny self and selfish interests, and stand with Paul, as he affirmed, "We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord" (2 Cor. 4:5).

Preachers should preach Christ because whether to one or a crowd, it is the only God-appointed means to direct men to Christ: "Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said...neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:8-12). Substitutes are useless. Only the preaching of Christ allures and draws souls to Christ, for in Him is eternal life, "And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent" (John 17:3).

The attractive power of Jesus Christ is seen in the fact that nothing melts and woos a sinner's heart like the preaching of Christ. Moral and social reform alone cannot change a sinner's heart; good resolutions cannot do it; turning over a new leaf cannot do it. Christ alone can "change the heart, renew the will, and turn the feet to Zion's Hill."

Three Thousand Converted

Nothing less than preaching Christ crucified and risen again can subdue and conquer fallen, rebellious nature. Peter simply preached "Christ crucified," but it was in the power of the Holy Spirit, and the mighty work of salvation was accomplished—three thousand were saved.

In his sermon on the day of Pentecost, Peter made the daring, but glorious announcement, "And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved." At the close of his sermon we see the results of the Holy Spirit's application on the preaching of Christ: "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added about three thousand souls" (Acts 2:21-24, 41).

Some are more concerned about pleasing people than exalting Christ. If Christ were more preached, the Holy Spirit's ministry in conviction would be more in evidence, and sinners would be more drawn to Him.

Christ is precious only to them that hear of Him and believe on Him. "How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard?..." (Rom. 10:14). If, as a preacher, you would honour Him and win others to Him, preach Him, make Him known, "...Shew forth the praises of Him who hath ca

lled you out of darkness into His marvelous light" (1 Pet. 2:9).

Christ Creates Christ-Thirst

The passion for preaching Christ is inspired by the knowledge that it is the surest way to create desire and longing for Christ. It is the office work of the Holy Spirit to reveal Christ to the soul, and thus bring the soul and Christ together. Nothing is so calculated to endear Christ to the soul, and to make Christ real to the soul, as the preaching and exaltation of Christ.

Many people leave churches because Christ is not given His rightful place of preeminence. They are unfed, unsatisfied, and unreached because some preacher preaches himself and offers substitutes instead of Christ, and no longer heralds the tidings, "Behold the Man!" and "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world."

Christ Counteracts Counterfeits

A further effect of preaching Christ is that preaching Christ is the only sure and effective way of victory over all that is contrary to, and opposed to Christ. He is the best antidote to the errors and false "isms" of our day. It is the perfection of Christ which reveals the imperfections of all against Christ. It is the fullness in Christ which reveals the emptiness of this world's best. Therefore, let us preach Christ and exalt Him to the view of all.

Failure's Terrific Price

Failing to preach Christ, the preacher brings upon himself the blood of souls. God, through His prophet Ezekiel, gave the warning which might well be posted up in every study:

"Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at My mouth, and give them warning from Me. When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; BUT HIS BLOOD WILL I REQUIRE AT THINE HAND. Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul" (Ezek. 3:17-19).

"Give them warning from Me" is the serious admonition from the very heart of God. The only way to avoid blood-guilt is by preaching Christ, heeding the deep conviction of the Apostle Paul, "...necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!" (1 Cor. 9:16).

From the seventeenth century comes this excellent word: "The motto that should be writ upon preachers' study-doors, and on the walls and on all the books they look on, on the beds they lie on, and on the seats they sit on, etc., should be this, 'The blood of souls, the blood of souls'" (Thomas Brooks).

Eternal Life Now and Hereafter

The exaltation of Christ should ever be the chiefest aim of the preacher, the evangelist, the Bible teacher, the Sunday School teacher or worker, the missionary, for to preach Christ is the highest commission God could ever entrust to man. Its importance is beyond all human evaluation. This is further understood in the fact that preaching Christ brings believers into the possession of eternal life now, and of glory hereafter.

Contrast the sinner without God, without Christ, without hope, with the believer in Christ already made a possessor of eternal life. No wonder the supreme joy of the witness for Christ is to preach Christ and, by God's grace, to win souls to Christ.

This was the joy of the Apostle Paul who exclaimed, "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming? For Ye are our glory and joy" (1 Thes. 2:19-20). "And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away" (1 Pet. 5:4).

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