

" Christ Centered Ministry

1 Corinthians 15:1-4, "Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:"

Several months ago I was talking on the telephone with another preacher. I asked him if he had a good subject to preach on come Sunday morning? His answer was Jesus Christ! Since that day he and I have enjoyed that little conversation and that statement just reiterated the fact that every sermon preached should be centered around Jesus Christ. The Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 2:1-2 seems to agree with that conclusion without any reservation. He felt that the most important subject that he could preach to the congregation at Corinth was Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

The fact is Christ should be the center of every sermon. If we search the scriptures we find many times that He is the one in the midst. He is the center of the three in one Godhead (1 John 5:7). He was crucified on the center cross of Calvary with a thief on the right and on the left (Luke 23:33). He is found in the midst of two or three gathered together in His name (Matthew 18:20). He is found in the midst of the doctors in Luke 2:46. He is found in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks (seven Churches of Asia) (Revelation 1:13) and He should be in the very heart of every sermon every pastor preaches from the pulpit.

But, is it possible to teach Jesus Christ without teaching the doctrine He taught? Is it possible for a preacher to have a Christ centered ministry without preaching the entire Word of God declaring all the counsel of God (Acts 20:27)? The answer is absolutely not! If a preacher's ministry is going to be a Christ centered ministry, that preacher cannot fail to preach that Jesus is a Covenant keeping God and if he preaches that, he will have to preach on the glorious subjects of Election and Predestination. If a preacher is going to have a Christ centered ministry, he will have to preach on the subject of the New Birth that Christ taught perfectly in John chapter three. If a preacher is to have a Christ centered ministry, he will have to preach on the subject of the Preservation of the Saints that Christ taught perfectly in John 10:27-30. If a preacher is going to have a Christ centered ministry, he will have to teach on the Hope of the Resurrection, and that is exactly what the Apostle Paul did in 1 Corinthians 15.

Examples

(1) In Acts 2 we find 120 disciples gathered together waiting for the promise of the Holy Ghost. Beginning with Acts 2:1 we find the congregation in one accord in one place and suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind and it filled the house where they were sitting. Upon receiving the Holy Ghost they began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. In verse 14 we read that Peter stood up with the eleven and began to preach. This sermon, which is a wonderful example of a Christ centered sermon, was preached with power that convicted the congregation that heard and was one that was filled with the doctrinal teaching of Jesus Christ. Peter taught the doctrine of the Resurrection (Acts 2:29-33), he taught the doctrine of Baptism (Acts 2:38), he taught the doctrine of Repentance (Acts 2:38), and he taught the doctrine of Conditional Time Salvation (Acts 2:40).

(2) In Acts 13:16 the Apostle Paul delivered a sermon to the children of God in Antioch. This sermon is a great history lesson that begins with events recorded by the inspiration of God in the book of Genesis, then gives information found in Numbers, Joshua, Judges, 1 and 2 Samuel, Kings and Chronicles and ends teaching about the resurrection of Jesus Christ our Lord. In this Christ centered sermon, Paul teaches the doctrine of the Eternal Sonship of Jesus Christ (13:35, Holy One), the doctrine of the Perfect Humanity of Jesus Christ (13:28), and the doctrine of Justification by Faith (13:39). After the Gentiles heard this sermon they wanted to hear this good old doctrinal sermon again the next Sabbath.

In 2 Timothy 4:1-5, the Apostle Paul delivers a charge to the young preacher Timothy. His charge was not to preach portions of the truth about Jesus Christ, but to preach the word that has been given by the inspiration of God (2 Timothy 3:16). I have no doubt that the Apostle believed Timothy should have a Christ centered ministry. According to this charge it will require one to preach the entire word of God to do so. Why is it so important for us today to adhere to this charge? The reason is simple! We are living in a time when individuals are losing the desire to hear the gospel truth that Jesus taught. We are living in a time when people will not endure sound doctrine, but will heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears (2 Timothy 4:3-4). We are living in a time when men have departed from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils (1 Timothy 4:1).

Therefore, no preacher should neglect to teach the doctrine that was first taught by the Lord, which the Church has been commanded to uphold (1 Timothy 3:15). If a man ever departs from this truth, he has departed from a Christ centered ministry. So if your pastor is one that preaches sound doctrine and exhorts the congregation to follow Jesus in a walk of discipleship, be sure to say Amen! And as for me, this is the only message that has ever brought comfort to my sin sick heart, the message of grace that gives all the glory to Jesus Christ. And to that I will always say, Amen!

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