

PREACHING THE CHURCH

In 1 CORINTHIANS 2.2, Paul writes how he preached “*Jesus Christ and Him crucified.*” Skipping down to verse 7, he continues this thought by writing how he preached “*the wisdom of God in a mystery*” (1 Cor. 2.7). If we turn to Ephesians 3, Paul explains what is contained in that mystery. In Ephesians 3.6, the mystery is about how “*the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body*” (Eph. 3.3-6). When you put those thoughts together, you have Paul preaching Jesus and those things concerning the church.

It is impossible to sever Jesus Christ and Him crucified from those things pertaining to the church. Throughout the book of Acts, we read about the disciples bringing to the world the message of Christ. The book of Acts also sets before the world a special group of people known as the church.

Consider how the book of Acts begins. The book begins with Jesus appearing to His disciples showing Himself to be alive “*by many infallible proofs*” (Acts 1.3). Just prior to His ascension, it says that Jesus spoke to His disciples “*of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God*” (Acts 1.3). No doubt Jesus was speaking to His disciples concerning the church. In fact, we are told in Colossians 1.13, that God “*conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love.*” Skipping down to verse 18 tells us that Paul was writing about the church.

Going back to Acts 1, Jesus speaks to His disciples about the kingdom (church). The disciples ask when Jesus would come and restore His kingdom. Jesus replies by telling them to go to Jerusalem and wait for the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1.6-8).

Turning to Acts 2, the disciples are now in Jerusalem. The Holy Spirit comes as promised (Acts 2.1-4). Peter speaks by the direction of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2.22-36). The crowd cried, “*What shall we do*” (Acts 2.37)? Peter tells them to repent and be baptized (Acts 2.38). Many of them were baptized, and the number estimated to be about three thousand (Acts 2.41). It was at this time that the church comes into existence (Acts 2.47).

You cannot think about Jesus and Him crucified and not think of the church. The two are intertwined together. When I enter into Christ through the doorways of baptism accessed through the blood of Christ, I am entering into the church. CLP

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“Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature”
-Mark 16.15

October 6, 2024

MEETING TIMES:

SUNDAY MORNING BIBLE CLASS : 9:00 AM
SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP: 9:50 AM
SUNDAY EVENING WORSHIP: 6:00 PM
WEDNESDAY EVENING BIBLE CLASS 7:00 PM

THE WITNESSES OF CHRIST

Before one could be found guilty of a crime deserving death, the Law of Moses required two or three witness (Deut. 17.6). There was a reason why one witness was insufficient. Anyone can fabricate testimony. Therefore it was necessary for there to be two or three others who could substantiate his claims.

The fact that Jesus claimed to be the Son of God did not mean that His testimony was not true (John 8.13,14). However, His testimony still needed to be collaborated (John 5.31). Indeed, Jesus brought with Him a number of witnesses that verified that He was the Christ.

First, John the Baptist was vocal about Jesus (John 5.32-35). In the beginning of Jesus’ ministry, John saw Him and declared, “*Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!*” (John 1.29).

Second, the works that Jesus did bore witness of Him (John 5.36). While some did not believe the words of Jesus, there could be no doubt that His miracles proved He was the Son of God (John 10.37,38).

Third, God Himself, bore witness to Christ (John 5.37). Inspiration records twice the voice of God proclaiming that Jesus was His Son. On both occasions, a voice came from heaven which said, “This is My Beloved Son” (Matt. 3.17; 17.5).

Finally, the Law of Moses testified of Christ (John 5.38,39). The Old Testament is filled with details of the coming Christ. All are fulfilled perfectly in Jesus. With these witnesses, how can one not believe? CLP

THE PARABLE OF THE UNFORGIVING SERVANT

MATTHEW 18:21

INTRODUCTION:

1. The greatest teacher the world has ever known taught primarily through parables. (John 3.2; Matt. 7.28,29; 13.31)
2. The parable of the unforgiving servant teaches us of the necessity of forgiving those who sin against us.

I. THE BACKGROUND CONCEPTUALLY

- A. The principle of forgiveness.
 1. **MARK 11.24,25:** “*if you have anything against anyone, forgive him*” We are to forgive everything!
 2. Being forgiving is a condition of being forgiven.
- B. The process of forgiveness.
 1. **LUKE 17.3:** “*if your brother sins against you, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him.*” Conditional.
 2. **LUKE 17.4:** “*And if he sins against you seven times in a day...you shall forgive him.*” Unconditional.
 3. **LUKE 17.5:** “*Lord, increase our faith.*” Difficult.

II. THE BACKGROUND CONTEXTUALLY

- A. Jesus teaches about reconciliation.
 1. **MATTHEW 18.15:** “*If your brother...*” Those with whom you have a spiritual relationship. (cf. Matt. 12.50).
 2. **MATTHEW 18.15:** “*If your brother sins against you.*” If he violates the will of God which hurts you.
- B. Jesus teaches about a resolution.
 1. Step One: Communication. **MATTHEW 18.16:** “*Go and tell him his fault between you and him alone.*”
 2. Step Two: Confirmation. **MATTHEW 18.16:** “*Take with you two or three witnesses.*”
 3. Step Three: Confrontation. **MATTHEW 18.17:** “*tell it to the church.*” Literally, the Jewish assembly.
 4. Step Four: Condemnation. **MATTHEW 18.18:** “*let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector*”
- C. Whatever happens in your relationship will be what happens with your relationship with God. (Matt. 18.19,20)

CONCLUSION: Forgiveness can be extremely difficult, but the parable of the unforgiving servant can help.

THE THIEF ON THE CROSS

The crucifixion puts Jesus front and center. It is His death that saves us. It is His blood that cleanses us. But on the right and left of Jesus were two thieves who were also crucified (Mark 15.27). At one point, both of them “*reviled him*” along with the chief priests, scribes, and elders. (Matt. 27.41-44). But one of the thieves came to his senses and rebuked his fellow thief (Luke 23.42). From the thief on the cross, there are some things we can learn.

The thief believed that God was to be feared. As the other thief “*blasphemed him,*” the thief “*rebuked him saying, ‘do you not even fear God seeing you are under the same condemnation?’*” (Luke 23.39,40). The fear of God is one of the most significant motivational factors to our living a life of obedience (Gen. 42.18; Ecc. 12.13; Ps. 111.10). It is when I fear the Lord that I am moved to seek out and understand the way He wants me to live.

The thief believed that there were consequences for sin. In his rebuke of his fellow thief, he said, “*we receive the due reward for our deed*” (Luke 23.41). There are two Greek words that are used to describe the act of stealing. One word is used in reference to stealing by stealth. It is when someone waits till you’re asleep or away from home and then breaks in and steals (Matt. 24.43). Another word is used in reference to stealing by force. This is robbery by violence. It is this word that characterized the two thieves crucified with Jesus. And one of them understood that they were getting their due punishment. We need to know that there are consequences for our actions. Violating the will of God comes with the consequence of spiritual death (Rom. 6.23). If we do not resolve the sin in our lives, we will face the consequences of eternal spiritual death (Mark 9.42-48).

The thief believed in Jesus. After rebuking his fellow thief, he then turns to Jesus and says, “*remember me when you come into your kingdom*” (Luke 23.42). The thief knew that Jesus was sinless and had done nothing deserving of death. The thief knew that Jesus was the King. Though Jesus was facing death, this thief knew that His death was not then end, but that Jesus would come into His kingdom (cf. John 18.36).

This was a man who believed in God, repented, and believed in Jesus. Was he saved? As a man who lived under the law of Moses prior to the law of Christ and the command of baptism, Jesus told him, “*today, you will be with Me in paradise*” (Luke 23.43). CLP