

The Wednesday Word, August 7, 2019: We Preach Christ Crucified

Paul and Barnabas were gospel men.

They preached "the Word" (Acts 13: 5-7; 25, 46, 49: 14: 3).

They "preached the gospel" (Acts 14: 7, 21).

The apostle Peter makes it clear that the preaching of the gospel and the preaching of the Word of God are interchangeable terms. He says, *"The Word of the Lord endures forever. And this is the Word which by the gospel is preached unto you"* (1 Peter 1:25).

What the gospel is may be gathered from, among other places, two chapters (Acts 13 and 14) which record the apostles' first missionary journey.

In their sermon in Acts 13, they describe Jesus as a Saviour. *"Of this man's seed hath God according to His promise raised unto Israel a Saviour Jesus"* (Acts 13:23).

They tell of His salvation. *"To you is the word of this salvation sent"* (Acts 13:26).

They preached about the cross (Acts 13:29).

They preached about the resurrection (Acts 13:30; 33ff).

They tell of forgiveness and justification by faith (Acts 13:38-39).

They tell of *"everlasting life"* (Acts 13:46).

They tell that Christ is salvation to the ends of the earth" (Acts 13: 47).

Like the apostles, when we preach or gossip the gospel, we speak of a person.

We speak of salvation from sin and its penalty.

In our gospel applications, we exalt Christ as the only means of right standing with the all-holy God. This gospel of ours is a revolutionary message. When Paul and others like him first heard, they did not believe it. They thought that there should be something left for them to do. They, like all good religious people, felt that they must have some part in clearing themselves in the sight of God. But the gospel is astonishing. Christ has paid it all! Not the slightest contribution is required or requested. It is Finished!

When the gospel truth first grasped Luther, he was crawling up the Lateran staircase in Rome, trying to work his way to heaven. However, the reality of justification by grace through faith sent him back home transformed with joy. As he and others began to understand the gospel's enormous implications, they shook the world.

How we need all who name His name to tell of Christ Jesus alone, the sinner's hope.

To preach Christ alone, the believer's righteousness.

To preach Christ alone, the God-Man.

We are wasting time if we are not involved with telling the message of Christ

crucified. However, take heed... We need to tell of Him lovingly, faithfully, courageously and humbly whether people will hear or not.

In conclusion, the gospel which the apostles preached is the same gospel we preach to-day. The message is the same. It is the person, doing, dying and rising again of Christ Jesus. This good news remains the power of God unto salvation (Romans 1:16). We have no authority to alter this message or to resort to fleshly methods to attract the crowds. The gospel will accomplish what its Divine Author pleases, and it will undoubtedly gather out a people for His name.

I was recently told by a professing Christian that we are not declared in right standing with God until our life is characterised by obedience. According to him, Christ's death on the cross was essential to right standing before God, but so also is our life of obedience. To which I say, "What a hodge-podge of confusion twice confounded!"

Although we firmly believe that the believer's life is characterised by obedience, our obedience is in no way part of the ground of our justification (acquittal before God). To teach that our obedience constitutes any part of our justification, is to indirectly teach that Christ's doing and dying are insufficient to guarantee us eternal life.

Utter Nonsense!

And that's the Gospel Truth!