We Preach Christ Crucified

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[0:00] This is the First Mustang Pulpit Podcast, a podcast of the weekly preaching and teaching at First Mustang. Thank you for joining us.

How many of you enjoy weather? All right. Yep. Several people. How many of you enjoy watching weathermen? Anyone? Okay. All right. Not as many hands go up.
But if you live in Oklahoma, then you understand that you're going to be confronted with games like the Celtics playoff game that was interrupted last night due to weathermen telling us about a particularly dangerous situation.
In our state. And yet I find great irony in that, in that I enjoy watching weather. I'm not scared by weather. I enjoy it. I even enjoy flipping through all the channels.
Most of them. Some I don't turn to, but I enjoy being told what's going on. But it gets a little bit frustrating when the weather is moving into Kansas and I can't see my Celtics play a playoff game.
[1:31] It gets a little frustrating. And yet, if I lived in those areas, I wouldn't be concerned about a playoff basketball game.

You see, for those of us who are in the direct path of a particularly dangerous situation with weather, pay attention.
All else tends to fade away. We're looking at the radar. We're seeing the streets, the cross streets, the north and south, east and west, and the direction of the storm.
So as to know whether we should take cover or not. And in those moments, we want those who are in the know, those who are storm chasers, who are watching the storm take place.
We want to hear from them what's going on and what direction it's going to hit in order to be prepared. Well, folks, I submit to you this morning that you and I live each and every day in a particularly dangerous situation.
[2:51] In that what awaits us is judgment from God. You see, there is coming a day when every person will stand before God.

And every person will give an account of their life. In fact, Scripture even says you'll give an account for every word that you've spoken. Every careless word that is spoken.
Every thought that you've had. Every intention that you had to do good or to do right that you didn't do. Everything is on display on judgment day.
And that's a particularly dangerous situation for those who are not found in Christ. If you will stand before God in your own righteousness, in your own good works, that's a dangerous situation because Scripture tells us that our good works are as filthy rags before a holy God.
And yet, for those of us who are found in Christ Jesus, we understand that Scripture says we've been clothed with the righteousness of another. The righteousness of Jesus Christ.
[4:10] And so it's not a dangerous situation, but it is a situation in which we rejoice. And we're reminded of amazing grace and of His sweet mercy.

And this morning, as we turn our attention to 1 Corinthians 1, I want to remind us of what is the central message of the Christian, of the Christian church, of the preacher, of the child of God.
Four words that resound throughout from the beginning of time to the end of time, from eternity past to eternity future.
And you see it there in 1 Corinthians 1, verse 23. Paul, writing to the Corinthians, says, But we preach Christ crucified.
We preach Christ crucified. This is our message. This is our declaration. This is all that is important in this life and eternity is encapsulated in these four words.
[5:33] We preach Christ crucified. Now, I'm going to focus in on those four words, but I want to give you the surrounding context that really begins back in verse 18 of chapter 1.

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So follow along with me in 1.18. 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.
For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise and the discernment of the discerning, I will thwart.
Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?
For since in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe.
[6:46] For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom. But we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles.

But to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ, the power of God, and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.
For consider your calling, brothers. Not many of you were wise according to worldly standards. Not many were powerful. Not many were of noble birth.
But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise. God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong. God chose what is low and despised in the world.
Even the things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are. So that no human being might boast in the presence of God.
[7:56] And because of him, you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption.

So that, as it is written, let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord. And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom.
For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling.
And my speech and my message were not implausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the spirit and of power, so that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.
This, the word of the Lord. See, the surrounding context is such that Paul is writing to a church that's in disarray, a church that's divided, a church that has decided to follow men and to exalt men and to glory in that.
[9:21] And yet, Paul is writing, and he wants to let them know the irony of ironies. In that, that which they are boasting about in following different leaders in the church is actually foolishness in the sight of God.

And the message of the cross, the message of a crucified Savior, while viewed by the world as foolishness, is actually the wisdom of God.
And he's reminding the Corinthians of this, that this is God's way. This is God's design. And in fact, in God's infinite wisdom, he has chosen this way of salvation in order to shame the so-called wise of this world, the so-called religious of this world.
He shames them by choosing those who are not wise by worldly standards. They are not powerful by or of noble birth by worldly standards.
But God chooses the foolish in order to shame the wise. And so we have these four words.
[10:46] We preach Christ crucified. And then again, in chapter 2, verse 2, I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.

Now, why is this important? Why is this the central message of the Christian faith? Why is this something that you and I, thousands of years later, still declare week after week, not only from this pulpit, but in Sunday school classrooms, and hopefully in your workplace, and in your neighborhood, that you are declaring Christ crucified?
Well, I want to just break this down into four points, and it's just going to come straight out of the text here in these four words, and we'll begin with we.
He says, but, so note the contrast, Jews demand signs, Greeks seek wisdom, but, so this is a contrast, we.
Now, we should ask ourselves the question, who is he talking about? Who are the we in this situation with this letter writing to this church?
[12:11] Well, again, it's not rocket science. We can just go to 1 Corinthians 1.1, and we know that Paul, called by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus and our brother Sosthenes.

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These are two of the we that preach Christ crucified. You see, Paul, the apostle, Paul, the one who he declared was one as an untimely birth.
He was brought to Christ later than the rest of the apostles. He was bent on destroying the church. He was a Hebrew of Hebrews.
He was a zealot. He was one who was bent on destroying those known as followers of the way. We find that in the book of Acts, that this apostle Paul was a Jew of Jews.
He was one who was going to protect the Jewish faith. And yet, here he is declaring he preaches Christ and him crucified.
[13:28] Well, what happened? Well, he was radically converted on the road to Damascus where he was knocked to the ground and the risen Christ said, Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?

Now, it's interesting there that he says, why are you persecuting me? Because Saul was persecuting the church. And yet, you see Christ declaring, when you persecute the church, you persecute me.
It's the bride of Christ, the church, followers of the way. And he is instructed to go and to meet with Ananias and while being struck with blindness, he would be prayed for and then he'd be taught of the Lord and he would go forth preaching Christ crucified.
You see, not only Paul and Sosthenes, but if we were to back up just a little bit or we were to take a little bit of a wider angle, we would understand that the we would be all of the apostles.
Those that Jesus called to himself, the exception of Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed him. Every one of the apostles would preach Christ and him crucified.
[14:45] And again, we see that not only throughout the New Testament and throughout the book of Acts, but we see it even in early church history that there were those who are witnesses of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

But not only that, if again, we were to take the angle back and have a little bit wider view, we could go back to the Old Testament. And the Old Testament prophets were those who were prophesying of a suffering servant, of one who would come, who would be pierced, who would be wounded, who would be crucified, one who would be led away as a one who was led into the wilderness, carrying our sins with him, bearing with him the sins of all mankind and all those who have gone astray.
The Old Testament prophets prophesied of the Messiah who would come. They are part of the we as well. But again, if we pull back a little bit further, we can go back to Genesis chapter 3, verse 15, when we find the first gospel, I will put between you and the woman and between your offspring and her offspring, he shall bruise your head and you shall bruise his heel.
The first gospel that is preached is there's coming one who will crush the head of the servant. You see, from the very beginning, throughout the Old Testament, to the apostles, then into the early church, and then we could look throughout church history, and we could see the long line of godly men who have, or are part of this we, the we that preach Christ crucified, from Augustine, to Luther, to Calvin, to Zwingli, to Edwards, to Spurgeon, to Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones, to modern-day preachers like Sproul and MacArthur, to even here in our own pulpit, we stand in this long line of godly men and women who have preached Christ and him crucified.
Now listen, folks, that should be a great encouragement to you because the world views this as foolishness. This is folly.
[17:21] You're preaching of a crucified Savior, a crucified Messiah, one who was shamed, and we say yes and amen because we stand in the line that goes back to Genesis through the Old Testament, into the New Testament, throughout church history to today, of those who are part of the collective we that preach Christ crucified.

Foolishness to the world, a stumbling block to the religious, specifically to the Jews.
How could this Messiah, the anointed one, come and be crucified? And yet, we stand in this line and we stand together with but we.
So let me ask you about you. Are you in this long line? Are you a child of God?
Have you trusted Jesus Christ as your only Savior and Lord? Do you know Christ? Or even better, does Christ know you?
[18:44] I'm not talking about head knowledge but I'm talking about a relationship that he knows you by name. You're one of his sheep and you know him as your shepherd.

And if you do, then you too stand in this line of the we who preach Christ crucified. But not only do we have the collective we, but the second word here, preach.

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we preach. It is to herald, to declare, to deliver news, to make a proclamation.
We are those who go forth with a message from another. Scripture would even tell us and Paul will tell us later that we're ambassadors of Christ, that we are those who come commissioned by another with a message.
And the message that we declare, the message that we preach is Christ crucified. We declare this with our mouths.
[20:03] You see, this news is news that comes from God. For the gospel is God's gospel. It is God's declaration. The declaration that He is the Creator.

He is the one who has created all things. He's the one true God. He is the one who has always been and always will be. He has no rivals. He has no equals.
He is one God. And He's revealed Himself as Yahweh, His covenant name. I am who I am. And this God who created us in His image commissioned us and gave us a job all the way back in the Garden of Eden.
We were to work that garden in such a way as to bring glory and honor to Him. And yet we know what happened in Genesis chapter 3 when Adam and Eve fall and they rebel against God and thus enter sin and death into the world.
and we're accountable because God has said if you take and eat then you will surely die. And then He drives them from the garden. And then it's just a chapter later that Cain is killing Abel and then we see just destruction and death and dying even with the age of man and woman.
[21:24] It decreases as we read through the pages of Scripture. And chaos is released in the world because of sin in the world. And judgment awaits.

And we're confronted with judgment all throughout the Old Testament. And it meets its culmination in the cross. When we see a sinless Savior suffering on the cross for not our sin, but our, not His sin, but our sin.
You see, we declare this. This is God revealing His gospel. gospel. That He is the Creator and He is holy and He is righteous and He is just and He is the judge.
And sin, man, while created in the image of God, has sinned, has rebelled. Every single one of us, all of us like sheep, have gone astray and we are accountable.
And what awaits us is death and judgment. And yet, God declares, I'm sending one who will pay the penalty for you. I'm sending my Son to live the righteous life that you couldn't live.
[22:38] I'm sending my Son to die the death that you deserve. I'm sending my Son who He will rise from the dead, conquering sin, conquering death, and ransoming, rescuing all who call upon Jesus as Savior and Lord.

This is the gospel that we would repent and believe. So you've been confronted with your particularly dangerous situation that you find yourselves in, that you're a sinner in need of a Savior. So what do you do? You call upon the Lord. You confess Christ as Savior and Lord. Jesus alone is the Savior. This we declare.
This we preach. Now, this has happened from the beginning of time, through the Old Testament, into the New Testament, throughout church history to today.
We still declare a message. It's what we do each and every Sunday when we gather together, Sunday morning, Sunday night, Wednesday night, in Sunday school classroom after Sunday school classroom.
[23:49] We are declaring the good news, God's gospel. We didn't make it up. We don't invent it.

We don't add to it, nor do we subtract from it. We are just a mouthpiece of the gospel. We declare the good news from God that man can be made right, so as not to fear judgment, but to rejoice in the righteousness of another.
So this we declare. Now again, remember the greater context. The world looks at this and says, this is foolishness. You're going to preach?
You're going to declare a message? And that is the power of God? Yes. And you know the testimony of the power of God?
all who were gathered here today who've called on Jesus as Savior and Lord. It's the power of God. The power of his word. That maybe it was a grandmother who shared the gospel with you.
[25:01] Maybe it was an aunt or an uncle. Or maybe it was a preacher in the church that you grew up in. Maybe it was mom or dad. Maybe it was a Sunday school teacher. Maybe it was a VBS worker who declared the message and God used the message to save you.

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You don't save yourself. You're dead in your trespasses and sins. In fact, if we were to read on in 1 Corinthians chapter 2, we would understand that the natural man can't understand the things of the spirit.
He's been blinded by the enemy. He's been blinded by the world. He's dead in his trespasses and sins is what Paul tells us in Ephesians chapter 2.
So if we're dead in our trespasses and sins, we need someone to bring us to life. We need someone who will cause us to be born again. We need someone who what Scripture says here in 1 Corinthians 1, 26 to 31, but God chose, God chose, God chose repeatedly.
God is the one who brings you from death to life. He's the one who brings you from condemnation to acceptance. He's the one who brings you from alienation to being a child of God.
[26:21] He's the one who brings you from being one who is said to be judged to being beloved and found in Christ. This we proclaim. Not only are we part of the collective we, but we declare this, we preach this.

So let me just ask you this question. Maybe you're sitting here and you're thinking, well, Jeff, I'm not a preacher, so I'm off the hook. I don't stand in a pulpit.
I'm not paid by a church. I'm not a professional preacher or evangelist, so I'm off the hook. Well, guess what? Part of the collective we is it's a responsibility of every single child of God that they would be ambassadors and they would be preachers and those who declare not only with their life, but with their lips the message of the gospel.
You've been given a message. Again, you didn't invent it. You didn't think it up. You're a recipient of His grace and His mercy, and you know it.
You should share it. We have opportunity day after day after day to be ambassadors of this message, to declare it with our lips, and so, application, you should know the gospel.
[27:49] Understand the gospel. Preach the gospel to yourself daily, and then you preach the gospel to others. It's amazing grace.

It's the greatest news that the world will ever hear. So you're not off the hook just because you don't have preacher in front of your name.
You're a child of God. Preach the gospel. Preach Christ crucified. But not only are we part of the collective we, and then we declare, we preach, then we preach Christ.
We preach Christ. We don't preach a self-help message. We don't preach advice. We don't preach financial tips.
We don't preach just how to have a better marriage. We don't preach how to be a better parent. We preach Christ, the anointed one, the Messiah, the God man.
[29:00] Jesus Christ. This is who we preach. He is the Son of God, the one who has always been in the Godhead and will always be.

He humbled himself in order to take on humanity to rescue us from our sin and impending judgment. He is the Alpha and the Omega.
He is the one who is the Lion of the tribe of Judah. He is the bright morning star. He is the one who conquered death, the devil and hell, and he is the one who is coming back again to establish his rule and reign for all eternity.
This is the Christ we preach. He is the one who said, I am the way, the truth, and the life, and no man comes to the Father except through me.
He is exclusive. There's no other way for a man to be saved than through Christ. Now again, understand this.
[30:07] The Jews saw this and thought, no way, this is a stumbling block because the anointed one is going to come and he's going to establish his rule and reign and will no longer be servants to other kingdoms who come in and destroy us and we're going to be the reigning world power.

And yet comes Christ, the suffering servant. Oh, his rule and reign is coming.
It is now and it's coming. But he came born of a virgin, raised, growing in wisdom and stature, without sin, and then suffers ridicule, mocking, beating.
Now, just think of this for a minute. They placed a crown of thorns on his head. Think of the irony of that. The world says, I place a crown of thorns on the so-called king of kings and lord of lords.
And yet, we know him as the king of kings and lord of lords. But he endured that. So you could be ransomed.

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[31:27] You could be rescued. You could be saved. This is the Christ that we preach. So important that we know Christ and as I mentioned, that he knows us.

We preach Christ and not only that, the final word, crucified. Crucified. I want you to think with me of why this offends the Jews.
Deuteronomy 21, 23, Galatians 3, 13 would say, one who is hung on a tree has been placed under a divine curse.
The Jews couldn't fathom this. This suffering servant, this anointed, this Messiah is hung on a tree. That's a curse.
The world would look at it and see, we don't truly understand it in our context today because we're not living in those times. the shame and the ridicule of crucifixion.
[32:46] Think of this, the Romans perfected the art of torture and the art of a slow death. death. They wanted to maximize pain.

They wanted to maximize suffering. They wanted to maximize gore and blood. The cross wouldn't even be spoken of in many circles with those who were sophisticated because it was such a place of shame.
And this is the message we preach? Yes, this is the message we preach. You see, this is God's message that makes the wise of the world look foolish.
Even though the world says this is foolishness, God says, this is my plan. This is what I'm doing.
Now, as one man said, the reason Christ came at the, what we would view as the worst possible time to be put to death is to reveal how ugly our sin is.
What an offense our sin is before a holy God. And everything in the Old Testament that speaks of sacrifices and of an animal whose throat is slit, spilling its blood on behalf of the people who had sinned.
[34:18] not the animal. The animal was the substitute. The animal was that which the wrath was placed on. God in his infinite wisdom, in his infinite mercy, in his infinite love, in his infinite grace, sends his son to be that substitute for sinful man and woman.

That his son who was without sin would be nailed to the cross and would be beaten and whipped and his back laid open, filleted open, exposing muscles and nerves.
And even as he hung on that cross and the pain of just trying to get another breath, all because he's experiencing the wrath of God poured out on sinful man, Christ crucified.
This message is the message we preach and this message is the power of God. Now in closing, I want to take you and show you something powerful here.
I already read it in the surrounding context, but again I want to read from verse 24 on. Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God, for the foolishness of God is wiser than men.
[35:53] The weakness of God is stronger than men. This is the message that God has a design and God has a plan. This gospel, this message, we preach Christ crucified is the message that's been given to us and it is the power of God and the wisdom of God.

Now, go on down to verses 30 and 31. And because of him, because of God, you were in Christ Jesus who became to us wisdom from God.
Righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. Listen, here's the great exchange. This is unbelievable when you think about it.
Christ suffers on the cross for the sin that he did not commit. He bears the wrath of God for you and your sin and your rebellion.
And what we get in return is wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, redemption.
[37:21] Listen, that's amazing grace. This is what we get from God because he chose us in Christ. Christ. And then in the end, when we understand this, we understand that the one who boasts is the one who boasts in the Lord, not in himself.

This message, we preach Christ crucified, culminates in us boasting in the Lord because this is his message. This is his plan.
And this is his message that we preach to those around us. And so I want to close this way. For those of you who may be in the room who say, I don't know Jesus as Savior and Lord.
I don't know him, Jeff. I know about him, but I've never called on him to be my Savior and my Lord. God and what is happening if your eyes are opening to your sin and to your situation and to your impending judgment and for your need for a Savior is God is the one who's doing the work and drawing you to himself.

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And what do you do? You call upon Jesus. You repent. The word of God tells us you turn from trusting in yourself to trusting in Christ.
[38:56] You call upon Jesus to be your Savior and Lord. And the Bible tells us that you shall be saved. We know that by faith, that when I call upon Jesus as Savior and Lord, he will save me.

And I implore you today that understand what Scripture says is today is the day of salvation. salvation. Don't listen to the lie from the enemy that there's always tomorrow.
You don't know when you'll draw your last breath. Today is the day. Turn to Christ today. And for believer in the room, maybe today you need to pause and rejoice and reflect on amazing grace and this message that we preach and that we preach Christ crucified.
perhaps for you, you've been challenged in that I've tried to become too sophisticated, too crafty, too wise by world standards in declaring the message.
Listen, the message will offend, but the message is simple in that we preach Christ crucified. And if you don't preach Christ, then you don't preach the gospel.
[40:15] Preach Christ and preach him crucified. Maybe for you believer today, it is that you need to repent and say, Lord, I know that I've been one who's been closed-lipped.

I've been fearful of man rather than fearful of God. I know there are lost around me, in my family, in my neighborhood, in my workplace, all around me, in school, and sports teams, and all around me. You've been given the great commission and Jesus has said, lo, I am with you to the end of the age. Oh, open your lips, declare the message, let this lost and dying world know there is a Savior, there is Jesus, there is one who was crucified, and they can turn to him, and they can trust him, and they can know him this day.
Oh, may it be said of us that we are a people that not only live our lives declaring the gospel, but we open our lips declaring the gospel as well, in that we preach Christ crucified.
This is our message, and this is the power of God. Let's pray. Our Father, Father, we thank you again for your word, for your gospel, for your message.
[41:48] Oh, Lord, we thank you that for many in this room, you saved us, you chose us, you called us, you drew us to yourselves, and we just boast in you, not in ourselves.

We know that we couldn't save ourselves, we can't bring ourselves from death to life, we know that we need one to cause us to be born again, and for that we say thank you for saving us, thank you for calling us, thank you for sanctifying us, and then, Lord, we pray if there be any here today who don't know Jesus as Savior and Lord, that today would be the day of salvation, that today would be a day in which they turn from their sin and embrace the Savior, and then, Father, we pray for us to be bold and loving in opening our lips and sharing the gospel with those around us, those divine appointments you give us all the time, oh, may we be faithful, faithful stewards of the message, we ask this in Jesus' name, amen.
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