

Series: 2 Corinthians
Title: For Jesus Sake
Text: 2 Cor 4: 5
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2 Corinthians 4: 5: For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.

Since this verse begins with the word “for” we know that it is a reason why the preceding statements are true.

2 Cor 4: 2...by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God....5: For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.

2 Corinthians 4: 3: But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: 4: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them...5: For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.

Proposition: The way we know that we are hearing Christ's true preacher and people is because this is what they do, “*we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.*”

For our divisions, we will take each phrase in verse 5.

WE PREACH NOT OURSELVES

Three things are included by “we preach not ourselves”: 1) we preach not *of* ourselves; 2) we preach not *about* ourselves 3) we preach not *for* ourselves.

One, we preach not *of* ourselves. No man can preach Christ—in spirit and in truth—of himself, no more than a man can believe on the Lord *of* ourselves. He can preach true doctrine. But he cannot preach in spirit and in truth of himself. No man can, of himself, have a message delivered to his heart from Christ and be the vessel Christ uses to deliver that message into the heart of his people. Our message is *of* God *from* God and made effectual in the hearts of our hearers *of* God. He declares it in the next two verses.

2 Corinthians 4: 6: 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. 7: But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.

God's preacher was predestinated by God to be Christ's preacher. God told Jeremiah, “*Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee and ordained thee a prophet.*” (Jer 1: 5) God called his preacher. God commissioned his preacher. God entrusted the gospel to his preacher. And God makes it effectual in the hearts of his people.

Therefore, by the power of God—of God—we preach only what Christ would have us to preach. We do not take the offense out of the gospel nor add to nor diminish from the clear teaching of Holy Scripture. We cannot compromise the gospel simply because it offends sinners.

Growing up I often heard members of will-working churches ask why we preach election since it is offensive and causes division and the knowledge of it is not necessary to be saved. That kind of approach would make

man to be the determining factor in what we preach. But we preach not of ourselves but of God therefore we are not permitted to stop declaring offensive doctrine simply because it is offensive and causes division. Christ himself teaches us he will cause division through his word.

Matthew 10: 34: Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. 35: For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. 36: And a man's foes *shall be* they of his own household.

But if we ceased preaching the gospel of Christ and bearing witness of him due to division then we would be doing what Christ here warns against.

Matthew 10: 37: He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. 38: And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. 39: He that findeth his life shall lose it:

Yet, because our faith and our witness is of Christ, we do the following,

Matthew 10: 39...and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it. 40: He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me. 41: He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward. 42: And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold *water* only in the name of a disciple, [only because he is my disciple, Christ says] verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.

Christ's people receive Christ's preacher because he preaches Christ. Through the gospel Christ makes us receive the reward of the truth of Christ declared in the gospel. Likewise, we receive all his witnesses and hear Christ's gospel through them. We care for one another and are profited by Christ through their word.

Further, not only does Christ declare divisions shall arise because of him, the Spirit of God also declares to us that heresies and divisions are necessary because by it Christ manifests who are his and who are not.

1 Corinthians 11: 19: For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.

The Lord declared that the persecution his preachers and people receive will offend some who once professed Christ and they will not endure because of it.

Matthew 13: 20: But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; 21: Yet hath he not root in himself, [or of himself] but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.

Yet, because we believe and preach not of ourselves but of Christ, through it all, God's true preachers and people are not divided. We may disagree on some point that is not essential to salvation but we are not divided. We discern when men are preaching and believing *of* themselves when they preach and continue under lies or when they would rather compromise the truth of Christ to keep peace or when they are offended due to persecution because of the world. And those who preach not of ourselves, preach and believe the gospel of Christ according to the scriptures regardless of whether men receive us or reject us. It is because God teaches us in our hearts, "*The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the LORD.*" (Jer 23: 28)

Two, we preach not ourselves means we preach not *about* ourselves. When preachers are so worried about offending sinners and worried about division that they dumb down the message with only what they deem essential, when they refuse to preach the scriptures in truth, when they take the offense out of the cross then the doctrine ends up being only about sinners. They end up exalting sinners rather than declaring them depraved.

But Christ's preachers and people do not preach *about* ourselves. We declare the truth that we are all depraved sinners by Adam's disobedience and by our first birth. Therefore, we are all in need of our triune God in Christ doing all the saving.

Three, we preach not *for* ourselves. Christ's true preacher is not preaching for personal gain—not for filthy lucre's sake. God's preacher is commanded by Christ in the heart to "*Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind.*" (1Pe 5:2)

So we preach not ourselves: 1) Not *of* ourselves but of God; 2) Not *about* ourselves except to shut us all up as guilty in need of Christ; 3) Not *for* ourselves for personal profit.

WE PREACH CHRIST JESUS THE LORD

We preach Christ because we want what pleases God!

Colossians 1: 18: And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all *things* he might have the preeminence. 19: For it pleased *the Father* that in him should all fulness dwell;

Colossians 2: 9: For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. 10: And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:

Christ is the fullness of the Godhead bodily and Christ is the fullness of his people—ye are complete in him! All fullness of God and all fullness of his people is in Christ! That is why we preach Christ. God spoke from heaven and said, "*This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.*" (Mt 17: 5)

We preach Christ because Christ is the gospel, Christ is the Word! Christ is Salvation!

John 1: 1: In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God...14: And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

1 John 1: 1: That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; 2 (For the life was manifested, and we have seen *it*, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) 3 That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship *is* with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

We preach Christ because his people need righteousness. We became guilty in Adam. Christ is the Righteousness of God provided for his people.

Romans 10: 4: For Christ *is* the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

We preach Christ because we are not ashamed of the gospel and we care for your souls and it is through the preaching of Christ that God reveals to his people that Christ is his Righteousness

Romans 1: 16: For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. 17: For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

We preach Christ because we are his ambassadors speaking Christ words and this is what Christ himself preached when he was here:

Luke 24: 27: And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.

Mark 16: 15: And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. 16: He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

The reason Paul was determined to preach Christ and him crucified only—the reason I am—is because Christ is all the guilty sinner needs! God give you grace to hear this and believe on Christ now:

1 John 5: 11: And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. 12: He that hath the Son hath life; *and* he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.

Sinners are perishing! There is no time to preach this world's vain message! This is why Paul said,

1 Corinthians 9:16 For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!

We preach Christ Jesus the Lord! Christ Jesus is Lord. We do not make him Lord. Christ Jesus is THE Lord. There is only one Lord and Savior—Christ Jesus the Son of God—the Way, the Truth and the Life! And Christ Jesus is MY Lord—therefore I have to obey my Lord! Is Christ Jesus your Lord? If so then you will submit to his command to believe on him and confess him and unite with his people!

OURSELVES YOUR SERVANTS FOR JESUS' SAKE

Since the first day I moved my family here, it has been my aim to serve you who are Christ's church!

Christ's preacher serves the Lord's people, not by running from house to house and serving in temporal things. Those who think that is how Christ's preacher serves Christ's church are copying vain traditions of men.

Christ preacher serves his church by giving himself to the word and to prayer seeking a message from Christ for you then delivering to you the message Christ gives. We serve by administering the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Table. In other words, we are your servants in spiritual things not temporal things.

Paul gave himself to serve the church at Corinth! But listen to how his heart was pained as he saw some doubting him:

2 Corinthians 12: 13: For what is it wherein ye were inferior to other churches, except *it be* that I myself was not burdensome to you? forgive me this wrong. 14: Behold, the third time I am ready to come to you; and I will not be burdensome to you: for I seek not yours, but you: for the children

ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children. 15: And I will very gladly spend and be spent for you; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved

How did Paul endure that kind of pain? What kept him from fainting or compromising?

2 Timothy 2: 8: Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel: 9: Wherein I suffer trouble, as an evil doer, *even* unto bonds; but the word of God is not bound. 10: Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.

Be sure to catch the reason why Christ's preacher serves his people—*"for Jesus' sake."*

2 Corinthians 1:24: Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your Joy:

Christ's preacher is not only helpers of your personal joy but helpers of Christ your Joy—helpers for Christ's sake who himself is your Joy! What makes Christ's preachers and people live so unto Christ and serve his people?

2 Corinthians 5: 14: For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: 15: And *that* he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.

So *"we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake."* TO CHRIST BE THE GLORY!

Amen!