

# Not in Word Only

by Martyn-Lloyd Jones

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*Martyn-Lloyd Jones emphasizes the enduring importance of the gospel's presentation through both preaching and the authentic lives of believers in a changing world.*

**Duration:** 54:55

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:33, Romans 8:23, 1 Thessalonians 1:3, 1 Thessalonians 1:8-9, 2 Peter 3:13, Revelation 20:10

**Topics:** "Power"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher uses a story of a man climbing a mountain to illustrate the journey of seeking and experiencing the glory of God. The preacher emphasizes the need for the pulpit to effectively communicate the gospel message, but also highlights the importance of the lives of Christians in verifying the truth of the message. The sermon then focuses on the person of Jesus Christ, describing his miraculous deeds, teachings, and his role in bringing transformation to people's lives. The preacher concludes by urging the congregation to give their preachers time to proclaim the gospel, as these profound truths cannot be adequately conveyed in just a few minutes.

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## Transcript

The first chapter of Paul's first epistle to the Thessalonians, and I want to emphasise in particular the fifth verse, which reads like this, For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance. But while I say that I want to emphasise that in particular, I do not propose to confine myself to it only, because, as you must have noticed from the reading, and all of you who are familiar with this chapter, you will have noticed that there is one theme, really, in the chapter, and it is the whole theme of the presentation of the gospel. Now, I say that there is no more important subject than this.

The whole state of the Church, and the whole state of the world, demands that we should pay very earnest attention to this whole matter of the presentation of the gospel. We believe this is the word of God. We believe it is the only hope for the world tonight.

We know that here is God's answer to our every need. And the problem is, how are we to get this message over to the masses of the people, in all the countries of the world? Now, this is a problem which is being recognised and acknowledged by every branch of the Christian Church. There is no section of the Christian Church that I am aware of that is not urgently concerned about this very matter at the present time.

They have got a new term for it. They call it today, the problem of communication. We are rather fond, as you know, of inventing slogans, and of using new terms.

And this is the term today, of all terms, that are being bandied about in the Christian Church, and in her various conferences and councils, the problem of communication. How are we to communicate this message to the masses of the people who are outside the church, and who are not Christian? It's a problem in the homeland, in every homeland. It is the problem on the mission field.

Now, we are being told today that this is a new problem. And we are told that it's a new problem for this reason. So many changes, we are told, have taken place in the world.

We are being reminded, almost ad nauseum, that we are the mid-twentieth century people. We are the people of the atomic age. We are the post-war people.

We are, some say, the post-Christian people. We are told that owing to the advance of knowledge, and in particular the science, we are confronted by a situation such as never confronted the Christian Church before in our whole great and long history. The problem of communicating this message to men and women who no longer are familiar with our terminology.

That's, we are told, the great problem. The people today don't know what is meant by justification and sanctification and all these other terms that we use. That they've lost their knowledge of these terms.

And that therefore this problem of communication is something which is quite new. And as you know, great attention is being paid to it. Some say that what is needed is a new translation of the Bible.

That was the great argument for the so-called new English Bible. We must have a Bible, they say, that Tom, Dick and Harry can understand. They don't understand the archaisms of this King James Version.

We must get a translation in the language of the people so that everybody will be able to understand it. And therefore the suggestion seems to be that as long as they understand the words, they'll understand the meaning and are likely to become Christian. There are all sorts and kinds of proposals put before us.

We must perfect our methods, we are told. We must learn the methods of big business, advertising. We are told on all hands that we must modernize everything in order that we may get this message right over to the masses of the people who are outside the Christian church.

Now, you're all familiar, I'm sure, with this argument and with this position. All I want to try to do tonight is to show you this. That there is nothing new at all in the situation which confronts us.

And that the sooner the better we realize that. The problem confronting us is precisely the problem that has always confronted the Christian church. You know, the world never varies.

The world is always the same. The world is always godless. The world is always Christless.

The world is always opposed to God. And it hates God. Oh, I know that it wears different clothing.

I know that it uses different terminology from age to age and century to century. But that's only on the surface. The world in its mind, its heart, never varies at all.

Unfortunately, the only variation is in the state and the condition of the church. The world remains a constant in its position. And therefore I argue that there is no need for us to feel that our problem is new or novel or unique.

I want to try to show you tonight, from this one chapter of only ten verses, that the problem that confronts us is precisely the problem that confronted the early Christian church. The problem that confronted the apostles, the original preachers of the gospel. Now, the apostle puts it before us here in a most interesting manner.

It is said by the authorities that this is the first letter that he ever wrote. That makes it interesting in and of itself. But what is still more interesting is this.

That in this one chapter, he reminds the members of the church of Thessalonica of how it was the gospel came to them. Our gospel, he said, came unto you not in word only. But he's reminding them of how it came.

And that's the thing to which I want to call your attention. Now, what was the position confronting the apostle? Well, I want to show you that it was precisely the position that is confronting us today. Here was this great apostle, with just a handful of companions with him probably, traveling round from city to city.

What were the conditions? Well, it was a pagan society. He was here in Macedonia, a part of modern Greece. And these people were pagans.

They knew nothing about Hebrew literature. They knew nothing about biblical terminology. And they were living a life of vice and sin and degradation.

Amazingly like the modern world. The apostle begins to preach his gospel in this utterly pagan, godless society. I suggest to you that that is perfectly analogous to the situation confronting us today in Canada, United States, Great Britain, or any other country under the sun at this present moment.

But here the apostle tells us how he faced that situation and how as the result of his facing it in that way, a church came into being in Thessalonica, which bore a very wonderful testimony. My dear friends, there is no need to look for anything new. There is only one thing for the church to do today.

There is only one thing for the individual missionary to do. And that is to go back to the New Testament and discover the apostolic method and the apostolic manner. The tragedy of the situation is that we think we need something new, whereas what we really need is this old, old gospel, preached in the old method and after the old apostolic manner.

And here the apostle puts it in very simple and plain terms before us. He tells us here that there were two main factors in the spread of the gospel in that ancient world. The first was the preaching of the apostles.

That is essential. They were the people to whom the message was given. The Lord commissioned them.

He called them. He commissioned them. He sent them out.

He gave them the message. Apostolic preaching. Obviously that comes first.

But you notice here that he tells us that that wasn't the only factor. There was a second factor in the spread of the gospel in that ancient world. What was that? Well, it was the life and the witness and the

testimony of the people who believed the gospel.

And the apostle pays great attention to that. Let me show it to you. Let us read from verse six onwards.

He says, And ye became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost, so that ye were in samples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia. For from you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God was spread abroad, so that we need not to speak anything. For they themselves show us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and the true God.

Now that being interpreted means this. You know, says the apostle, You good people, members of the church at Thessalonica, have made my task of preaching very much easier. What I find now, says the apostle, is this.

Since I preached to you, since you believed the gospel and became members of the church, what I find is this. When I go to a place, I begin to speak and they interrupt me and they say, Yes, we know all about you. We know who you are.

We've heard about those people down at Thessalonica. We've heard of what happened to them as the result of your preaching. You know, the noise has spread abroad throughout all the world.

You, says the apostle to these people, are opening the doors for me. Everybody's talking about you. They say, Have you heard of what's happened in Thessalonica? As the result of the preaching of Paul.

The whole world, he says, is talking about it. So that as I visit the place, I find they're ready to listen. They're curious to hear.

They want to know about this message that has brought such a transformation in your lives and in your whole way of living. Very well. This is the second factor.

And I want to emphasize the two factors this evening. What can we do to bring this glorious message, the glorious gospel of the blessed God, to the masses of the people? Well, the first thing I say is this. The Pope, it must do its work.

We must know what to preach and how to preach it. But that alone isn't enough. Our preaching must be verified in the lives of you good Christian people, who are called to work in an office, in a factory, in some profession.

You are to be the living proofs of the truth of the message. That's how it happened in the first century. This preaching was demonstrated to be true by the lives and living of the people of Thessalonica.

And everybody was talking about them. And so the door of opportunity was opened widely for this great and glorious message of the apostles. Very well.

Let's look at these two things together. Because the apostle tells us that there are two things that are common to the two factors. The first thing is the message that was preached.

Our gospel came unto you not in word only. That's the message. But there was this other factor.

Not in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance. Now there are the two things. The message and the power of the Spirit upon it.

That's to be seen in the apostles. It is to be seen equally in the people who believed the message and became members of the Christian church. Let me hold these two things before you this evening.

Unless we return to these two things, my dear friends, we might as well give up. This is how Christianity began. This is how Christianity has continued.

Look at all the great revivals and reformations of history. What are they? They are nothing but a return to the book of the acts of the apostles. It is when the church comes back to this, to the message and the power of the Spirit upon it, that you get revival and reawakening and men and women turning to God to serve Him with all their being.

Very well. Let's look at these two things. Let's look at the message for a moment.

What is it we are to preach? What is Christianity? Isn't it an appalling thing that we need to ask that question? But we do need to ask it. There are all sorts and kinds of things passing as Christianity today that I attenuate for one cannot recognize as Christianity at all. What is the Christian message? Well, the apostle tells us immediately.

Our gospel. The first thing about the Christian message is that it is a gospel. What is a gospel? Well, a gospel means good news.

The first essential characteristic of our message is that it is the proclamation of the greatest good news that mankind has ever heard. And if there is no gospel in our message, it isn't the Christian message. And yet you know there are many in the world today who claim to be preaching the Christian message and yet the message to them is nothing but a constant talking about and protesting about atomic or hydrogen bombs and war and this and that and the other.

If you take your impression of what Christianity is from the newspapers and so much of the television and the radio, well, you think it was nothing, I say, but a protest against war and armaments and about the color question and various other political and social matters. Now, I'm not here to say that Christianity has nothing to say about these matters, but what I am here to say is this, that that isn't good news. And the thing that makes the Christian message a gospel is that it is a proclamation of good news.

It isn't just topical comments on the latest scandal in the newspapers or the latest bit of news. It isn't that we spend our time in telling kings and princes and presidents and prime ministers how they ought to be running their countries and how they ought to be solving the international problem. We are not qualified to do so.

I haven't come here tonight to tell you what the Queen of England and her government or the President of the United States or anybody else ought to be doing. I'm not familiar with the facts. I haven't got all the data before me and it would be presumption on my part to tell them or give them advice as to what they are to do.

That's not my calling. The business of the Christian preacher is to announce, proclaim the good news, the gospel, the greatest good news that the world has ever heard. And then the apostle goes on to define it further.

This good news, this gospel, is something that is stated and proclaimed in word. In words. Now you notice the apostle puts it in a very interesting manner.

He says our gospel came not unto you in word only. But when he says that it didn't come in word only, he is saying that it did come in word. If I say that something doesn't only happen, I mean it does happen like that but there's something in addition.

And that's what he's saying. He said our gospel did come to you in word. It came to you in words but it didn't only come in words.

It came also in power and in the Holy Ghost and in much assurance. Why am I troubling to emphasize this point? Well I'm doing so unfortunately because again it has become necessary to do so. We are living in an age, my dear friends, when men and women dislike doctrine.

They dislike theology. They dislike definitions. We are living in a weak and a flabby age that dislikes precision.

We are living in an age when people tell us that Christianity is something that is so wonderful that it can't be defined at all. What makes a man a Christian? Well they say you know you can't tell but it's a wonderful spirit that a man has within him. It's a wonderful feeling.

What is Christianity? Well Christianity is doing good. There are men who are being praised as the greatest Christians of this century who deny all the essential tenets of the Christian faith but they're regarded as great Christians. Why? Because they've made sacrifices and because they're doing good.

What is it that makes a man a Christian? What is Christianity? Can it be defined or can it not be defined? We are living in terrible days, in days of confusion, in days of muddle, in days of uncertainty. We are living in days, I say, when there is a positive objection to definitions of the Christian faith. They dislike what they call propositional revelation.

There was a slogan a few years ago that put it like this. It said Christianity is caught, not taught. It's a wonderful spirit that gets you.

You don't know what it is, you can't describe it, you can't define it but you feel it's wonderful. It's caught, not taught. And there is this great objection today to propositional revelation or propositional truth.

They say not only can you not define the Christian faith, you mustn't even attempt to do so. It's a foolish thing to do. It's like trying to dissect the aroma of a flower.

It's a wonderful thing but it's a mystical thing. You can't reduce it to terms and to definitions. Let me give you one example of what I'm trying to say.

I remember reading a book about five years ago which had a very wonderful title. It was called Ultimate Questions. And it was about this whole question of the Christian faith.

But this is what the man said in the book. He said, you know Christianity is something like this. It's as if a man were told by somebody that if he only climbed to the top of a certain great mountain that he'd have a wonderful view when he got there.

If you only get to the top of that mountain you'll see a great panorama stretching out before you such as you've never seen in your life. The man is told this and he begins to feel a desire to see it. So one day he gets up early and he travels in his car.

He has to leave it. He begins to walk along lanes. He even leaves them.

He begins to cross fields and tracks and at last he's at the foot of the mountain and then he begins to climb up and to scale the heights. The sun is shining in the heavens. Doesn't matter.

He wants to see this view. On and on he goes. Eventually on hands and knees holding on to tufts of grass scaling the side of rocks cutting his hands and his knees.

Doesn't matter. On he goes and at last he arrives at the summit and there stretching out before him is this glorious panorama. What does he do about it? Well, said the man in the book, he doesn't go home and try to define it.

Try to say it's like this and it isn't like that and reduce it to some propositions. Why? Says the man. The thing is ridiculous.

What the man does is this. He just stands there on that mountaintop his eyes and his mouth wide open lost in surprise and amazement and wonder. No, no, he says.

He doesn't define it and describe it and dissect it. I can imagine him singing he says but what I can't imagine him doing is to try to reduce it to a number of propositions. That's the popular teaching.

We are being told today with this ecumenical spirit that seems to be taking everybody up and which will eventually take Protestantism back into Rome if we're not careful. We are being told that it's just this wonderful spirit you have and that if you're against communism you're a Christian of necessity whatever you may believe and so on. That it's something that eludes definition.

My dear friends, this is the most important question. I don't know of any more urgent question tonight than just this one question. Can Christianity be defined or not? And according to the apostle Paul it can.

Our gospel he said came unto you in word and this is what the church has said throughout the centuries. Were it not so tragic this would be very amusing. I know many people who hold this modern view that Christianity can't be described, can't be defined, can't be stated in propositions and yet the very selfsame people go to their church Sunday by Sunday and at a given point in the service they get up and they recite together the Apostles' Creed.

What's that? It's a series of definitions. It is a series of propositions and later they recite the Athanasian Creed and the Nicene Creed. What are these? Still more elaborate definitions and descriptions of the truth.

Why was it that the church ever had these creeds? And there's only one answer. The church produced the creeds because she had to do so to defend the faith. Even in the New Testament we see false teachings beginning to creep in and the apostles have to deal with it.

They have to denounce it. They contend for the faith. It became worse after the days of the apostles and there were all sorts of false gospels and false creeds and false ideas and the church was in terrible danger.

So the fathers of the church under the leading and the guidance of the Holy Spirit met together in their great councils and what for? Well in order to draw up definitions of the faith. They said it is this but it isn't that. They defined and described heresy and they denounced it.

They did it in order to guide and in order to protect the people. You see the early church councils the early ecumenical councils met together in order to define the faith. Modern ecumenical councils meet in order to say that the faith cannot be defined.

That's how far we have travelled from the days of the early church and this not only happened in the first century. Do you remember what happened after the great protestant reformation? Well this is what happened. Almost immediately after that great outburst that great outpouring of the Spirit the leaders of the church found it was absolutely essential to define and to describe their faith.

So they drew up their great confessions of faith. You have your Augsburg Confession. You have your Heidelberg Catechism.

You have the 39 articles of the Church of England. You have the great Westminster Confession that is supposed to be believed by the Presbyterian churches of the world. What are these great confessions? They are nothing but definitions of the faith.

They are nothing but descriptions of what is true and what is not true in terms of exposition of scripture. So you see the church in all her great periods has always been very concerned to show that the Christian faith is something that can be defined, described, stated in propositions. And yet the majority of men and women in the Christian church today are denouncing this whole idea.

I want to show you that they are not only departing from the almost unbroken tradition of the Christian church throughout the centuries, they are denying the teaching of the apostles themselves at the same time. Let me show it to you from this one chapter. Our gospel came not unto you in word only, but it did come in word.

What was that word? In a very remarkable manner the apostle tells us. Had you ever noticed that in verses nine and ten of this little chapter you have a perfect synopsis of Christian doctrine? They themselves show of us what manner of entering in we had unto you and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God. What was it the apostle preached about? Did the apostle preach politics to these people? Did he say to them, it's about time you banded yourselves together and raised an army to rid yourself of the yoke of the Roman Empire? Did he object to the taxation? Did he protest against the various things that were happening? That wasn't his message at all.

What was the content of the preaching of the apostle Paul? He tells us. Where did it start? What was its beginning? What was its first point? He answers, God. Apostolic preaching starts with the being of God.

Oh, I do want to emphasize this. Christian preaching, you know, doesn't start with man. There are too many of us starting with man today.

We are all so subjective. We start with ourselves, our needs, and then we always want something to satisfy us. Christianity never starts with man.

It always starts with God. Let me say this even at the risk of being misunderstood. The Christian proclamation does not even start with the Lord Jesus Christ.

It starts with God the Father, God the Creator. I believe this is much of our trouble at the present time, that we start with the Lord Jesus Christ. We say to people, come to Jesus, and you'll get this, that, and the other.

That isn't Christian preaching. Christian preaching starts with God. This is how the apostle preached.

He saw these people. He saw they were worshipping idols. He saw that they were making gods for themselves.

They sometimes made them out of wood or stone or precious metals. They made their gods. They built temples to them, and then they served them.

They worshipped them. They offered sacrifices to them. They were worshipping idols.

The apostle started there. And what he said to them was this, he said, you know, you are worshipping nothing. These idols, they have no existence.

You've made them. They have no life. They have no power.

They can't do anything. They are liars. They are emptiness.

They are vacuity. There is nothing there. He exposed to them the utter folly of idolatry.

How these men were bowing down to nothing, to a lie, to a supposition, to a projection of man's mind, to the creation of man's own idea. Nothing there. Idols, vanities.

But he went on to tell them that that was not the serious thing. The serious thing was this, that while they were worshipping these dumb idols, these vanities, this emptiness, they were not worshipping the only true and living God. So he began to tell them about him.

He began to tell them about the God who'd created the whole universe. Here is the true God. Here is a living God.

Those idols, they can do nothing. You have to carry them about. They can do nothing at all.

They have no power. They have no life. But there is, he said, a living God.

And so he began to tell them about the God who created everything out of nothing at the beginning. The God who said, let there be light and there was light. The God who created everything that is and man as the crowning glory of it all, made him in his own image and likeness and made him Lord of creation.

He told them about God, the God of the Hebrews, the only God, the only true and living God. He began there. And then he went on to tell them the vital importance of all this, for God had created men for himself.

He had created men in order that through men he might govern the universe. He had created men in order that men might be his companion, in order that men might live to his glory. As the first question and answer in the shorter Catechism of that Westminster Confession puts it, what is the chief end of men? And the answer is the chief end of men is to glorify God and to adore him forever.

The apostle preached that. He said, you know, man is not just an animal. Man doesn't do just what he likes and what he pleases.

He's been made in the image of God. God's given him a law. He was meant to live according to it.

Why is this important? It's important because man is a responsible being. And this world is a life under God. And when it comes to an end, it isn't the end.

Men goes on. And then he stands before God in the judgment. Do you notice the last words? And to wait for his Son from heaven, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.

Now, here was apostolic preaching. The apostle looked at these people and he said, look here, you've been worshipping these benefits and you haven't been worshipping and serving the only true and living God and yet you'll have to stand before him because you're human beings, you're men and women and he puts certain possibilities in you and he'll examine you in the light of them. You've got a soul in you and you've got to give an account of it to God.

Can you do so? Have you lived to his glory? If you haven't, you would be under the wrath of God. You're even under it now. Repent, he said, turn to God for your whole eternal future depends upon your relationship to God.

He said, God has revealed through the people, the Jews, throughout the running centuries that he is a holy God and a righteous God and a just God, a God who hates sin, a God who is of such a pure countenance that he cannot even look upon sin and he said, you're all of you moving towards him and you'll stand before him in a final judgment. That's how the apostle preached. That's the apostolic message.

Not the political conditions of the Roman Empire, not certain injustices of this or that, but man in the totality of his being under God and under the wrath of God. Hear me, says somebody, I thought you took some time just now to tell us that the message of this Christian church is gospel, is good news. It doesn't sound very much like good news to me at the moment.

All right, my friend, I quite agree with you. This is only the introduction to the sermon. And you know, I'm beginning to think that half the trouble in the Christian church is this, that we've forgotten the introduction.

We are in such a hurry. We say come to Jesus and the people don't come to Jesus. Do you know why? I can tell you.

They've never seen any need of Jesus. They've never realized the truth about themselves. They come to Jesus if they're miserable and unhappy, if they want physical healing, if they want guidance, if they want all their problems solved.

That's not the way to come to Jesus. It's no use simply telling people come to Jesus. They've got to see their need of Him.

You know, before you come to the gospel, you need the law. Before you begin to talk about salvation, you preach about God. And the world today is as it is because it's forgotten God.

Man is the center of the universe. Man's needs come first and last. And God, the Almighty, the Everlasting, the Eternal God, who is over all and still reigns, is forgotten.

The introduction to the sermon is forgotten. And that is the introduction. But thank God the message didn't stop at that point.

Having thus shown them their need and their desperate plight and estate, the apostle went on to tell them about the gospel. And here it is, the whole of it in verse 10. And to wait for His Son from heaven whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus.

He began to tell them about Jesus. Who is He? Jesus of Nazareth, the carpenter, Son of Mary and of Joseph. He began to tell them about this young Galilean that suddenly appeared upon the scene at the age of 30 and began to preach the gospel.

He was once a boy, age 12, and he could confute and confound the doctors of the law in the temple. This amazing person and His astounding teaching, His miracles, His marvelous deeds. Jesus.

Who is He? And He told them that this was none other than the Son of God. His Son from heaven even Jesus. What is Christian preaching? Here it is.

The doctrine of the Incarnation. My friends, you can't do without doctrine. If you try to, you'll soon have no gospel.

And you'll be preaching nothing but some kind of glorified humanism. It isn't Christianity. Christianity is doctrinal.

It's a matter of definitions. It's words. It's theology.

And here it is. The Incarnation. Jesus.

Son of God. Jesus of Nazareth. Born of a virgin.

Born miraculously. That's doctrine. Essential doctrine in the Christian faith.

The doctrine of His person. Two natures in one person. You don't understand.

Neither do I. Did you ever think you could? This is the doctrine. Jesus, Son of God. Two natures, one person.

Here He is, the Son of God, come from heaven to earth. The whole doctrine of the Incarnation and the virgin birth. You can't be Christian without believing these truths in particular.

These propositions. These are the essentials of the Christian faith. There is no Christianity apart from it.

If He's just a man to you, a good man, a political agitator or the pale Galilean, that's not Christianity. It's the doctrine of the Incarnation. When the fullness of the times was come, God sent forth His Son made of a woman made under the law to redeem them that are under the law.

That's what He preached. And then He went on to tell them this astounding thing about His death upon a cross which delivered us from the wrath to come. And here He came to tell them about the death of this amazing person, Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God.

And you notice that what He preached to them was that He delivered us from the wrath to come. In other words, He didn't merely tell us how to deliver ourselves. He didn't come just to teach us how to live and to

give us an example and a pattern and affiliate to our endeavor.

He didn't come merely to tell us to sacrifice ourselves. No, no. He came to do something for us.

He has delivered us. So He expounded to them the doctrine of the atonement. And you have no Christianity without that.

He showed them how thereby dying upon the cross He was bearing our sins and their punishment. As He puts it in writing to the Corinthians, God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself not imputing to them their trespasses. He hath made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.

Or as the Apostle Peter puts it, who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree that we being dead to sins should live unto righteousness by whose stripes we are healed. The message of the cross. We must be clear about this.

What is the message of the cross? What is the message concerning the death of Christ? Is it that there He is just proclaiming that though you are doing this to my son I still love you? No, no, that is not enough. There is substitution here. There is punishment here.

He is the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. God hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all. By His stripes we are healed.

We behold Him stricken, smitten of God. The great transaction when God takes your sins and mine and puts them on His Son and smites Him, punishes Him for us and thereby offers to us a free forgiveness and salvation which delivered us. He has done it.

It is all in Him. He has not come to tell us what to do. He has done it for us.

He took our place. He died our death. He bore the punishment of our sins.

That was apostolic preaching. And it is a preaching that comes in words. It is a particular doctrine.

It is specific. It defines. And the apostle reminds these people of it.

But then you notice he goes on to remind them also. And to wait for His Son from heaven whom He raised from the dead. The resurrection.

And how important it is. I find there are so many today who no longer believe in the literal physical resurrection. No, no, they say.

What matters is that Jesus still lives and He influences us. We don't believe that He literally rose in the body out of the grave. They say it doesn't matter.

It doesn't matter. Would Paul ever have written 1 Corinthians 15 if it didn't matter? What he says is this. If Christ be not written from the dead, our preaching is vain and your faith is in vain.

You are yet in your sins. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are all men most miserable. Now is Christ risen from the dead? The doctrine of the resurrection.

My dear friends, how appalling it is that men say that the gospel doesn't come in words. That definitions don't count. That it doesn't matter what you believe as long as you are a good and a nice man.

And as long as you want to call yourself a Christian. No, no. Without the literal, physical resurrection, there is no gospel.

There never would have been. Delivered for our offenses, says this same Paul. In Romans 4, 25.

Delivered for our offenses. Raised again for our justification. Declared to be the Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness.

By the resurrection from among the dead. Here in this mighty event, God is proclaiming his Son. And proclaiming that his work was sufficient.

The reconciliation has been accomplished. You can't be a Christian without believing these particular doctrines. And lastly, and to wait for his Son from heaven.

Yes, he ascended into heaven. And he took his seat at the right hand of God. And there he is waiting.

Until his enemies shall be made his footstool. Don't be dejected Christian people. He is on the throne.

All power is given unto him in heaven and in earth. He sits, he reigns, he waits. Until his enemies shall be made his footstool.

And he will come again. Not as the babe of Bethlehem. But as the Lord of lords.

King of kings. Riding upon the clouds of heaven. Surrounded by his holy angels.

And he will come to judge the world in righteousness. He will destroy all evil and sin. The devil and Satan and hell.

And all shall be cast to the lake of perdition. And Jesus shall reign. Where'er the sun doth his successive journeys run.

His kingdom stretch from shore to shore. Till moon shall wax and wane no more. And his people are waiting for the great day.

The adoption. For with the redemption of our body. And the ushering in of this kingdom.

That never was on land nor sea. The new heavens and the new earth. Wherein dwelleth righteousness.

That was apostolic preaching. And may I say this in passing. You can't preach that in twenty minutes.

I want to say this in the name of God. You Christian people have a great responsibility. You're in too much of a hurry to get home to your televisions.

Give your preachers time. If they preach the gospel give them time. These mighty truths can't be declared in a few minutes.

Let's look at them. Let's glory in them. Let them speak to us.

This is the apostolic message. And if you don't want to go on hearing about this. I tell you in the name of God.

You're not a Christian. You've never been one. These are the things that will occupy the saints.

Throughout the countless ages of eternity. This is the message. This is the gospel.

Here it is. In words. In definitions.

In propositions. In theology. In doctrine.

Do you believe it? Have you received it? But wait a minute. The apostle says that it came not in word only. But also in power and in the Holy Ghost.

And in much assurance. And I want to emphasize this as much as the other. I'm not going to keep you.

But I do want to emphasize it. Orthodoxy is absolutely essential. I don't care if you have a world church.

If it doesn't proclaim this truth it will be useless. It will be a travesty. Orthodoxy is absolutely essential.

But orthodoxy alone is not enough. A church can be perfectly orthodox. And at the same time perfectly dead and perfectly useless.

The apostolic message was orthodox. But there was something else. Our gospel came not unto you in word only.

But also in power. And in the Holy Ghost. And in much assurance.

What's he talking about? He's talking primarily about himself as he preached to them. He says you know when I preached to you. I knew that it wasn't merely I Paul that was speaking.

I knew that the Spirit was using me. I knew that I'd got the power of the Holy Ghost. I knew that he clothed himself upon me.

I knew that I was nothing but the vehicle, the channel, the instrument. I knew that I was being used. I was preaching with much assurance.

I knew something was happening. I knew that he was working in you. You see the apostle always relied upon the power of the Holy Spirit.

It isn't enough that we be certain of our message. We must be equally careful about our methods. And the apostle's method was trusting the Holy Spirit.

Listen to the way he puts it in the second chapter negatively. I begin at verse three. For our exhortation was not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile.

But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel. Even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God which tieth the hearts. For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know.

Nor a cloak of covetousness God is witness. Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you nor yet of others. When we might have been burdensome as the apostles of Christ, etc.

What's he mean by all that? What he says is this. You know, says the apostle, when I preached to you I wasn't concerned about pleasing men. My only concern was to please God.

The apostle never tried to ingratiate himself with his congregation. I can't imagine the apostle Paul bouncing up onto a platform, cracking a few jokes to put the congregation at ease. And then entertaining them with flippancies in order just to play upon their feelings.

The thing is unthinkable. No, no, this blessed message, in power, in the Holy Ghost, in much assurance. Listen to the way he puts it in writing to those Corinthians.

He went amongst them, he says, in weakness and in fear and in much trembling. There was no self-confidence in this man. This man wasn't a great master of ceremonies, commanding a great crowd.

No, no, weakness, fear, much trembling. Fear that he'd stand between the people and this blessed message. And our speech and our preaching, he says, was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the spirit and of power.

Nobody talked about him. Indeed, the Corinthians criticized him. They said his presence is weak.

The apostle was nothing to look at. Let's never forget that. He wasn't a handsome fellow.

He was a short man, according to tradition. Bald-headed, beaked nose with inflamed eyes, almost repulsive and offensive. His presence is weak.

And his speech, they said, offensive. It didn't matter. It was in demonstration of the spirit and of power.

My dear friends, our methods are as important as our message. And we mustn't use the methods of the world. We mustn't be so concerned about results that we resort to devious, doubtful methods.

We mustn't play with men and try to entice them and ingratiate ourselves. No, no. The proclamation of this blessed word in the demonstration of the spirit and of power.

I knew, says Paul, I preached with much assurance. That was apostolic preaching. It was also the preaching of Martin Luther.

It was the preaching of John Calvin. It was the preaching of a John Knox that could make Mary, Queen Mary of Scots, tremble in her seat and make her more afraid of his prayers than the army of England. Beloved people, where have we gone to? What's happened to us? When shall we come back to this? This is the need.

This is the way. This is God's way in all revivals and reformations. The preaching of the word in demonstration of the spirit and of power.

That's how Christianity spread at the beginning. That's how it's always truly spread throughout the running centuries. Just a word on the other side before I close.

That was the truth about the apostles. It was equally true about the people. What he says about them is this.

He became followers of us and of the Lord having received the word in much affliction with joy of the Holy Ghost. He puts it in the thirteenth verse of the second chapter like this. For this cause also thank we God

without ceasing because when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men but as it is in truth the word of God which effectually worketh also in you that believe.

You see that's how it happened in them. Here was this little apostle preaching in the mighty power of the Holy Ghost and with this assurance. And these pagan unenlightened ignorant people living a life of vice and evil and sin as they listened to him they said these are not the words of a man.

There's something more here. They realized that they were the words of God. What made them realize that? Oh the working of the same spirit that was working in the apostle in them.

It is the Holy Spirit alone that can convict of sin. It is he alone that can enlighten the darkened human mind. It is he alone that can give a man life anew.

And as Paul was preaching in the power of the Spirit, the Spirit was working powerfully in them and they received the word. They were totally ignorant. They knew nothing about God or about the Lord Jesus Christ or the Holy Spirit.

These ignoramuses they believed the power of the Spirit enlightened them. That's how missionary work is done. That's how the gospel can alone be preached in any country, whatever the background, whatever the conditions.

And he worked in them and they believed and they received it. And he became followers of us, he said, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction with joy of the Holy Ghost. This was their story.

They believed the gospel and they followed the apostles and they joined the church. It led to great affliction. They were persecuted by their relatives and friends.

They became the outcasts of society, didn't make any difference. Though they were in much affliction, they were filled with the joy of the Holy Ghost. Having seen this truth they were ready to die for it if necessary.

And many of them did die for it. Having seen that nothing matters but a man's relationship to God and his eternal destiny, nothing else mattered. Though they were dealt with so cruelly, they smiled in the face of it all.

And some of them, as they were later cast to the lions in the arena, they just thanked God that at last they'd been accounted worthy to suffer for His name's sake. And the result of this was, you see, that everybody talked about them. It was a genuine work.

I know it was genuine, I can prove it to you. They turned to God from idols to serve the living and the true God. It was not just a question of coming forward at the end of a meeting and signing a card and then forgetting about it the next day or in a week or a fortnight.

No, no. These men were born again. The Spirit had done His work.

And they turned to God from idols. They left the idols, they left the world, they left their sin. They entered into the life of Christ and took their place in the Christian church.

And everybody saw it and everybody talked about it. And you know, they not only began but they went on with it. This is a great thing in verse 3. Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, your labor of love and your patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father, they went on with it.

It wasn't a flash in the pan. It wasn't an emotional excitement. The work had been done.

They were new men and women in Christ Jesus. And they went on, come what may. And what was the result? The result was that everybody was talking about them.

From you sounded out the word of the Lord, not only in Macedonia and Dakar but also in every place. Your faith to God will be spread abroad so that we need not to speak anything. This is what happened, you see.

Men and women living in Thessalonica would stand on their street corners and they'd suddenly see a man going along to a meeting. And they'd say, do you see that man? Do you remember what that man used to be like? He was a drunkard. He was an adulterer.

He was a wife beater. He was a scandal. He was a shame.

But look at him now. His face is different. He dresses differently.

Everything is different. His wife is different. His children are different.

His home is different. What is it? Oh, well, said one of the others, I can tell you. He's been like this ever since that man Paul came to preach on.

Ever since he heard that man Paul, he's been a different man. The greatest need of the hour as I see it is a mighty outpouring of the Spirit of God to authenticate, to prove the truth of this one and only message. Let us go on preaching the truth.

But let us at the same time pray unto God to open the windows of heaven and to baptize us anew and afresh with the power of the Holy Ghost.

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